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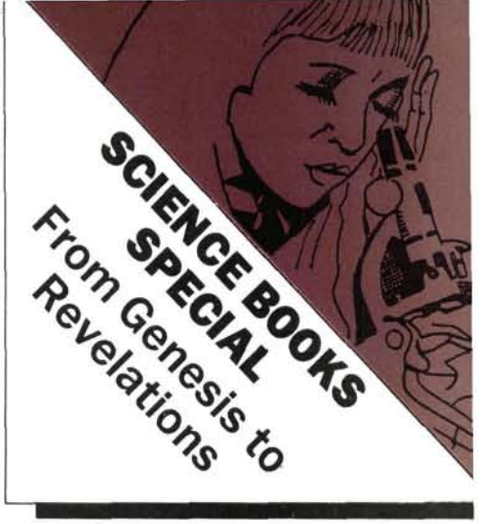

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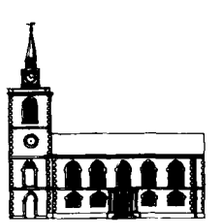

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NEW STATESMAN

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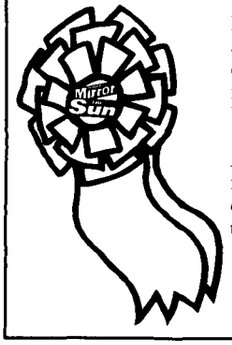

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Letting them in

THE FAMILY is now a dominant, if implicit, theme in the election campaign. It has been made so in two ways which appear to contrast, but which have disturbingly common features.

First, the tabloid press has seized on the election as an opportunity to co-opt politicians into their running soap, 'Infidelity'. In part this is simple political muck-slinging: the main victims of their efforts have so far been David Steel, the Liberal's leader, and Roy Hattersley, Labour's deputy. Steel got large and rapid damages from an instantly-collapsing *Daily Star*: Hattersley issued a writ earlier this week against the *News of the World*.

In part, though, it is because those who take so little interest in politicians that they do not know their names are reminded of them because of television coverage. They become stars for a month, and thus merit the Joan Collins treatment.

It is easy enough to take exception to this kind of journalism. There appears to be no empirical evidence for correlating a politician's effectiveness in office and his or her sexual orientation or fidelity. The public interest is thus not served by revelations which have no bearing on democratic choice.

But that is *too* easy: especially when a second consideration is taken into account. The family has been used, with spectacular success it seems, by the Labour Party for electoral purposes: Labour, with a moderate manifesto, has been by far the most radical in its first party political broadcast shown last Thursday.

Rarely can a party political broadcast have been the cause of so much chagrin on the part of those who missed it: it remains perhaps the major chattering topic in progressive circles. 'Did you cry and when?' is a standard question: grown men are not ashamed to say they did. In focusing so unrelentingly on Neil Kinnock and on his family — including his late parents — the broadcast director Hugh Hudson and scriptwriter Colin Welland achieved a miracle of emotive precision, presenting the Labour leader as at once golden-hearted and steel-willed. Labour let it be known almost immediately that it had caused an instant jump in its private polls' rating of Kinnock himself — much needed, for he entered the election trailing badly behind the Prime Minister.

To many, that is the end of it. There is an election on. The right-wing papers have had months of Kinnock-mauling, taking lumps out of a sitting target. Time to redress the balance, to show the country that the man is human, has achievements, is warmly regarded by such national figures as Sir James Callaghan, Barbara Castle and Denis Healey. Where was the distortion? The man *has* a nice-seeming family, a warmly emotional streak, guts and works hard, thinks fast and speaks like an avenging angel. Where's the harm in showing it?

But it isn't the end of it. If politicians' private lives are to be used in this way by their own parties, why should their enemies show inhibition in how they abuse it? If a large reason for electing a party is because its leader is fortunate in his marriage, what is the defence against a paper or TV channel which can discover evidence of a family row? Or of a cabinet colleague's infidelity? Or of an aide's homosexuality?

The revelations of Gary Hart's affair are likely to boost family values in the Presidential race even higher than their normal apple pie level (see Elgy Gillespie, p 5). Here, the impetus has been a little different: Labour's image-makers clearly thought that these values had to be stressed to counteract both negative coverage of Kinnock himself — 'weak', 'henpecked' — and of alleged broadsides against heterosexism. But in doing so, they have elevated the private life into the status of party policy. If we are to vote for the family because it is good, warm and loving, what are we to do if it turns cold?

And it was unnecessary. Labour's continuing success in whittling back the Tory lead has been due to their seizure of issues half submerged before the campaign began, and which many believed would not properly emerge in the course of it. The heightened awareness of politics and the multitude of audience and phone-in shows shows a well of anxiety and resentment over the Tory record. Proposals on education which clearly point both to selection and to fee-paying have revealed a Tory party demanding a third term in order to entrench privilege in the very heart of those post-war reforms which sought, imperfectly, to diminish harsh class differences. Labour's senior team looks fresh, rational and keen for power with a purpose. An anti-government majority has not only been shown to exist, but to be dynamic.

The broadcast may assist in all this. It may add what many now consider to be the indispensable gilding of 'humanity'. But it will have done so at a price. The price is that, in nationalising more of the private life than previous Labour leaderships, the party will have reversed the progressive trend towards a view which saw as irrelevant and intrusive public discussion of personal matters and it will have given a sharp twist to a competitive spiral of wholesome image making.

The government now looks as if it can be beaten. But it is the *issues* which must beat it. □

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DIARY

Derek Gladwyn, regional union baron and chairman of the conference arrangements committee, is a veteran fixer of Labour politics. Yet walking through Embankment Gardens on the first day of the campaign, executive brief case in one hand, the other pressing a mobile phone to his ear, he looks more like a top executive giving instructions to his broker. It is a powerful symbol of Labour's new image.

The mobile phone is everywhere. Even on the day Mrs Thatcher announced the election, Neil Kinnock was photographed on the car telephone in his Rover on the way in from Ealing. The 1983 equivalent would have been Michael Foot, complete with dog and stick. It *is*, though, more than a gimmick. One of the points made in Denis Healey's devastating memo to the national executive after the 1983 election — in which he tells the painful story of how he was sent to a factory making parts for Argentinian warships — was the isolation felt by politicians on the road. This time the party has its act together — and among other things that means making it work for television.

Nevertheless, the incongruity of Labour's manifesto launch on Monday is not lost on Neil Kinnock. As an aide explains that he will walk up a gangway littered with television equipment to the accompaniment of Brahms' first symphony, towards the strange dock-like wooden podium from which he will kick off the campaign, he mutters an only faintly apprehensive 'Ole'. He and Roy Hattersley are wedged into their little box like two earthlings about to be beamed up to some galactic punishment chamber after a trial before Darth Vader. When I remark to Andy McSmith, from Labour's press office, that it looks frankly silly, he says 'yeah, but let's see what it looks like on television.' And sure enough, it looks all right on the screens.

○

Labour's television consciousness — a good deal of it learned from the Tories in 1983, as Cecil Parkinson points out in an interview — is illustrated by the successful 'Kinnock — the movie' Thursday night party political broadcast. The preview for journalists is in a darkened Transport Hall at the TGWU in Smith Square. During the few bars of sinisterly low music at the opening of the sequence showing the Labour leader's eloquent attack on the Liverpool far left at the 1985 Labour conference, a comparison strikes the *Mirror*'s David Bradshaw in a flash. 'It's like *Jaws*,' he says. 'Just when you thought you were safe to be in Militant.'

○

After the Alliance manifesto launch I chat to Alec McGivan, the Oxford-educated, 33-year-old national organiser for the SDP who worked for the Campaign for Labour Victory before the party's formation. McGivan is not one of those who ever wrote off the Labour Party's chances of headway in the polls, so he is prepared to be less surprised than some about the first week. But he points out that while the majority of key SDP target seats are potential gains from the Tories some could still come from Labour. He cites Blyth, where Labour is in disarray after the departure of John Ryman, and Durham city which could prove an interesting three-way contest. So too could Stevenage, with a large population of skilled workers in new private housing, lost by Labour to the Tories in 1983, and where the Alliance will go all out to persuade Labour voters that their best chances of voting the Tories out is the Alliance.

○

At the Tory manifesto launch, the Prime Minister is on formidable form. Her total domination of the press conference gives an inkling of how tough a time she gives ministers in Cabinet. Her knowledge of the departmental briefs of individual Cabinet members is frequently as detailed as that of the ministers themselves. 'You should be saying all this, George' she apologises after giving a long answer on defence. In fact Younger is one of the best performers. But even he violates the English language when he ends a sentence with the observation that under opposition plans the deterrent would not 'do its effect.' Dreamily, but far from sotto voce, the PM corrects him: 'In other words it won't deter.' And when a reporter raises Labour's success in promoting the fight against crime as an election issue, she says: 'You answer this *very effectively*, Home Secretary.' He didn't, as it happens.

Persistent questioning drew out the Prime Minister on education at Friday morning's press conference, an occasion which went badly for the government after she appeared to go further than her own education secretary in implying that schools opting out of local authorities could not only be selective but also impose charges on parents. Not that Labour does not also have a tough time. 'My editor would shoot me if I got a quote as wrong as this,' the *Guardian*'s David Hencke tells Bryan Gould after he played the tape of what Norman Tebbit actually said about unemployment falling below 3m. ('Bullshit,' says another journalist.) But as politicians stop being MPs and become candidates so the lobby journalists have the chance to become old-fashioned reporters again at election time. It is no bad thing.

○

At the suggestion, offered over a lunch, of a middle-ranking minister (who thinks the Tories will win by a majority of between 40 and 50 seats) I travel to Watford to see Michael Heseltine in action. On the way from the station to the Conservative club in terraced suburbia the taxi driver, from Pakistani Kashmir, tells me he will be voting Tory, because he doesn't trust the Labour Party to keep the economy in shape.

Heseltine, currently on a breathless tour of over a sixth of the constituencies in England and Wales, appears to be more popular than ever among Tory activists 17 months after his resignation over the Westland affair. The current total of 99 engagements, which he is fulfilling in a hectic programme of travel by air and chauffeur-driven Jaguar, is substantially higher than the invitations he received to speak when he was Secretary of State for Defence during the 1983 election. The first thick batch of invitations came to Heseltine directly. But realising his drawing power, party chiefs have now started to put speaking requests from area Tory offices his way.

Speaking on a dais liberally adorned with pictures of Mrs Thatcher, he mentioned the Prime Minister only once — and then not by name. In his inability to utter the name of his party leader, and in his unique appeal to party activists in the role of the handsome, golden-haired idealist prepared to return to the backbenches on a question of principle, not to mention his habit of speaking tirelessly with the minimum of notes, he has something of the status of a Tory Tony Benn.

But there the similarity ends. For while his speeches do not name Mrs Thatcher they are a highly orthodox restatement of her policies. On Thursday his speech stressed all the virtues of property-owning capitalism which inform the Conservative manifesto. To the repeated question on his tour about whether he expects to rejoin a third term Conservative Cabinet, Heseltine has the stock answer that the election is about Conservative policy and 'not the political future of Michael Heseltine.'

That is only partly true. The latest *Economist* poll on the subject shows that Norman Tebbit remains the most popular alternative leader to Mrs Thatcher among Conservatives, scoring 30 per cent with Heseltine in second place with 20 per cent. But among all voters Heseltine is in the lead with 24 per cent — and this rating is significantly up on the 16 per cent he scored in December. Not surprisingly, Heseltine's admirers argue that the rating among all voters is a more important index since the Conservatives will need a leader who can attract votes rather than simply be popular among confirmed Tory supporters.

Donald MacIntyre

Donald MacIntyre is political editor of the Sunday Telegraph.

ROGER WODDIS

The last refuge

The sweating attendants are fingering their collars,
There are ominous rustlings in the wood,
The lights in the hall have begun to flicker
And the wall-chart doesn't look good.
The bed in the darkened ward stands empty,
Words cannot fill the carrier-bag,
The rats are roaming the ravaged city;
When all else fails there is always the flag.

We are besieged by malevolent enemies,
Nail the warning to the trembling tree:
Given their arms and their massive muscles,
Rape will be served with our morning tea.
This is a time for fools and scoundrels,
And quelling the staff with a blazing eye,
For wrapping yourself in the cloak of jingo,
For the throbbing voice and the barefaced lie.

While we're extending our line of lances,
Beyond the hill they are folding their tents;
Still we shall cry who reject surrender
That suicide is the best defence.
The banners wave, but the songs sound hollow
Against the ghosts we claim to deter;
It's great to be great and flaunt your glory,
But greater still to surrender to her.

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Very cold

THERE IS bemusement in the Alliance now that the full text of a speech David Owen delivered last month is circulating in London. In it the SDP leader threw himself with hardly a quibble behind the Reagan policy towards Nicaragua.

There is much talk of 'US vital interests'. The Contadora peace plan is written off as unsuccessful in Washington's eyes. The contras are apparently 'freedom fighters'. The Sandinistas are urged to hold 'genuinely free and fair elections'. European support for Nicaragua is dismissed as 'the increasing politics of gesture'. No mention is made of the International Court of Justice's condemnation of the US. The discourse would have done credit to the hard Reaganites of the Heritage Foundation.

Owen's views are totally opposed to the generally critical line adopted towards the contras by David Steel and Alan Beith. (Beith, incidentally, is supposed to be the Alliance spokesman on Central America.)

They also fly in the face of the views of senior Alliance members and supporters from Lord Kennet and Lord Chitnis downwards, who observed the Nicaraguan elections and expressed themselves satisfied. Even the Tory MP David Ashby commented that there could be 'no suspicion of malpractice' when he came back from the polls in Managua.

When Dr Owen finally joins the Conservative Party he will clearly do so as a very cold warrior indeed. The contras will rejoice — if they're still there. ●

Wives in stag heaven

Washington

THE FIRST LADY gave lunch to Washington's political wives the other day. Like Mrs Lee Hart, who could herself run for President and win after her noble defence of an obviously unstable mate, these wives are crucial to their husbands in every sense. The next election will run on 'character issues', i.e. wives and children, and we are going to be sickened by the hearty, wholesome, family-bent Mr and Mrs Cleans that clog those New Hampshire kitchenettes and Iowa porches over the long hot summer.

This wifely motley crew could have been the guests of Mrs Lincoln. Same East Room. Same Chandeliers. Same Martha and George Washington either side of the fireplace. And the menu was an ornate Victorian affair that began with 'artichokes bisque aux quenelles' and salmon flakes, followed by eight more courses. 'Should be blanched hartichokes,' hissed the Senator's ex-wife beside me, adding 'under Carter we were lucky to get Coca-Cola.'

Nancy wasn't eating much, but she and Reagan eat just steamed vegetables mostly now, a White House chef told me. Mindful of the way Mrs Reagan is now down to size 2 and heading for a size zero, the Senatorial wives strove to let their grapefruit tuiles alone and leave their wineglasses full. Perrier won. Very few wives had let themselves go, in that quaint old-fashioned way. How can you, if your husband's future office depends on it?

Stereotypically, the political spouse is the achiever who is forever willing to turn up. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Teddy's daughter, once said: 'Washington is full of politicians — and the wives they married when they were young and foolish.'

These days the hastily-wed may legally shed, and still get elected to the White House. And, says the Senator's ex-wife, you can still 'womanise' and get away with it — Hart notwithstanding — just as you always could, and many administration chiefs do. LBJ did. JFK did. The black head of the Senate dining room, Robert Parker, lists sexy peccadilloes galore in his memoirs, *Black and White on Capitol Hill*. Congressman Jenrette's wife Rita, who herself confessed to 'doing it' on the Capitol steps, puts the House philanderers at around 10 per cent. The Senator's ex-wife and others put it much higher.

There was House chairman Wilbur Mills, discovered drunk in the Tidal Basin with the stripper Fanny Foxe. Governor Bob Kerrey, veteran and amputee, was 'swept off his foot' by actress Debra Winger, said the Nebraska headlines. When singer Linda Ronstadt was carrying on with Governor Jerry Brown and turned up in New Hampshire, she said she wanted to get 'the lay of the land'. In these cases, candour triumphed.

'I'm running for office is the best come-on line ever,' says the Senator's ex-wife. 'It worked on me.' Washington is still stag heaven, where politicians always have a filibuster to keep them in town, like legendary Congressman Willy Mangam of Carolina who told his wife he was busy and never got to see her again. As for Teddy Kennedy, well, his staff were purple in the face last week. 'Womanising? Heck, that's the most disgusting thing I ever heard of,' said one of his prettiest aides, clamping a hand over her exploding giggles.

Still, to get along you have to go along, as the Senator's ex-wife says. You even have to roll bandages once a month for the Red Cross. More or less every wife turns up for Mrs Reagan, because in this post-Hart race of equally long shots, a contest of wives is not unfeasible. Not a few of the winners must wish they had Lee Hart.

But Barbara Bush, the Second Lady, is warm and has honest white hair. And Republican Bob Dole is strongest on the wife front. Not only does his wife head Transportation, but she is a real smasher called Libby. 'I regret I have but one wife to sacrifice to the country's infrastructure,' Dole once joked. And while we lunched at the White House Libby was telling the press she felt she had been central and crucial to his career. As she is ideal 'Presidential timber' herself, this may or may not mean she will run, and she wouldn't say.

Laying aside those candidates already sullied by womanising, man-ising and even boy-ising charges, we have some other feisty wives with White House itches and good looks. Democrat frontmate Anne Gephardt of Missouri is all over the hustings with her kids 'humanising' the unbearably clean and boyish Richard Gephardt on the character issues. 'Tipper' Gore is another blondshell, an activist who tries to rub out the risque lyrics of rock n' roll hits, fighting for moral standards and the right while her husband takes care of the left.

All are Baby Boomers, a decided asset in the arduous 'character' campaign, when you need energy and a reasonably bimboidal wife to discount the threat of work-hungry 'bimbos'. Though older at 58, the Trumanesque Democrat Paul Simon of Illinois is 'safe' and a hard act to follow in his science-teacher suit and bow tie, while his wife Jean is a savvy, bright lawyer with three state races behind her.

One thing is sure. Reagan blessed 'Tailgate' for letting him off a bad week of Irangate with the Secord hearings. With their eclipse, once again the amazingly short memories of the American public prevailed. Or as historian Marcus Cunliffe puts it, dame luck rescued lame duck.

Elgy Gillespie

Buddies in Fiji

Fiji's importance, both strategic, and economic, is a matter of geography. 'To understand the future', said US Secretary of State George Shultz, 'you must understand the Pacific'. 'The region of the 21st-century', President Reagan called it. By 1981 the *Wall Street Journal* was arguing:

> When we measure the near-optimised markets of Europe and its 250 million persons against the 1.5 to 2 billion people of the Pacific Basin alone, Europe seems a puny affair.

Richard Armitage, US Assistant Secretary of Defence and the Pentagon's 'Pacific Architect' explained in 1985 that

> The strategic importance of the Pacific to the United States is attested by the fact that five of our eight mutual security treaties are with nations of the region. The world's six largest armed forces are in the area of responsibility of the US Pacific Command: those of the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, India, North Korea and the United States. Five of these six have been at war within the past 11 years and the sixth is North Korea who, some have said, is it war all the time.

When former Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamiese Mara changed his mind, in 1982, over Fiji's ban on US nuclear ships, it was the result of careful wooing, explained more by the use of carrots than sticks. Since the turn of the decade he has been assiduously cultivated by the US as the elder

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statesman of the Pacific: he was given the red carpet treatment in Washington, when Reagan said he showed 'a high degree of political courage' and he was named as the Pacific Man of the Year by the South Pacific Peoples' Foundation, an aid organisation with links with the US State Department.

Fiji itself is no prize pearl in the necklace of economy and strategy. A better port facility is currently available at nearby American Samoa. But policy in the area is based on 'strategic denial' and in the words of John Richardson, editor of *Islands Business*, Fiji is a 'political lynchpin' in the region. The US doesn't want *another* card to fall in its Pacific house.

In the foreground of the recent coup were Fiji's internal problems. Dr Timoci Bavadra's recent election brought to an abrupt end 17 years of rule by the Alliance party of Ratu Mara, made up of indigenous Fijians and successful European and Indian business people. The Labour Party, formed only three years ago, won around 10 per cent of the indigenous Fijian vote, mainly from urban workers and the intelligensia. John Dakuvula, an indigenous Fijian now living in New Zealand described the response of the rural poor:

> Fijian land rights are protected under the constitution and yet as always the Alliance Party exploited the ignorance of rural people to make them believe they would lose their land under the Labour Party.

When Bavadra, himself an indigenous Fijian, came to power on the Indian vote in surprise election results he was acutely aware that, in the words of Fijian analyst Jim Anthony, the two principal racial groups 'are compartmentalised in all but the highest levels and divided by modern greeds and ancient prejudices'. He thus ensured that all potentially controversial cabinet portfolios — land, culture and the like — were held by indigenous Fijian ministers. Clearly, it wasn't enough to allay fears.

In the rather hazy middle ground to the coup, where local and regional factors meet, is a flurry of activity of right-wing groups and US organisations. Press in the region, particularly in Australia, have picked up on these elusive pointers to the US interest — if not outright involvement — in the coup.

- Most widely reported has been the presence of former deputy director of the CIA, Vernon Walters, in Fiji last month. Walters has a knack of turning up in places just before a coup — in Chile and Brazil, for example. He took advantage of a trip to the region to drop in on Bavadra and request a change in policy — the new government had reintroduced a ban on US nuclear ships.
- Marian Wilkinson reported on Australian Broadcasting Corporation TV that Bavadra had met US Ambassador Dillery the week before the coup to say that he was aware that Apisai Tora, one of his most vociferous opponents and leader of recent marches, had been receiving US money for some time.
- In the weeks between the election and the military take-over former Prime Minister Mara went to Honolulu with the US AID director of South Pacific Programmes, William Paupe — of US Special Operations in South-East Asia during the Vietnam war. In Honolulu Mara was hosted by Retired Navy Admiral Lloyd Vasey, formerly of Naval Intelligence, now running the Pacific Forum, a right-wing think-tank with alleged CIA funding.
- The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported sources saying that three CIA operatives arrived in Fiji five days before the coup, bringing their numbers to five, one of whom was in Parliament House at the time of the coup.
- Mara spent much of his time in Washington, DC in 1984 in the company of one James Roderick Lilley, former US ambassador to South Korea and a CIA operative in the region.
- Mara returned from a visit to Washington in 1984, when he was Prime Minister, with a step-up in US funding, including $300,000 a year under the US Weapons Standardisation Programme. The money is a sizable fillip to an army of 2,600.
- There are two programmes to nurture 'buddy relations' between Fijian officers and the US army. One of these, the Expanded Relations Programme (ERP), set up especially to groom elites from the Pacific and Indian Ocean, operates out of Fort Shafter in Hawaii. Its Pacific Armies Management seminars lecture military officers on subjects such as 'Internal Defence'. Fijians are also flown to the US mainland for the International Military Education and Training programme, extolled by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as enabling them to talk directly to a country's high-ranking military officers who in their targeted countries were often also in government posts.
- On the Sunday before the coup, its leader, Lt-Col Sitavani Rabuka — a devout lay preacher who normally spends his Sundays in church — was seen playing golf with Ratu Mara and Achmed Ali, widely seen as the civilian architect of the coup.
- The Anti-Communist League is active in Fiji and includes some of Mara's political allies in its numbers. At the time of the coup, Mara was at a right-wing Pacific Democratic Union conference in Fiji. The Union receives money from the US National Endowment for Democracy. The West German far right Hans Seidel Foundation, close associate of the US Heritage Foundation, is also active in Fiji.

The evidence is circumstantial: there is no 'smoking gun'. But it's legitimate to ask: what did the US know?; how soon did it know?; and if it knew, why didn't it tell the Bavadra government?

Jane Dibblin

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Still a monkey

Princeton

WHY DO SO many American commentators still insist that no significant improvements are possible in the Soviet system, despite more than two years of evidence that Mikhail Gorbachev is determined to introduce far-reaching reforms?

A *Miami Herald* columnist crudely dismisses the

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new Soviet leader with the proverb, 'Dress a monkey in silk, and he'll still be a monkey.' A *Washington Post* editorial concludes that Gorbachev's proposed changes in the system will not 'make it less of a police state but a more efficient police state'. And Henry A. Kissinger assures his *Time* readers that the Soviet Union 'will be a totalitarian state even after the reforms are completed'.

A full explanation of this wrong-headed tradition would require a large book exploring both American political thinking and the nature of the Soviet system, but five important factors can be briefly identified.

● Only one is rooted primarily in the Soviet system. In all countries, political change is generated by struggles between opposing social demands, ideological convictions, group interests and leadership factions. Those dynamics in the Soviet Union have usually been concealed by official censorship, which has misled Americans into believing that such conflicts do not exist there; that 'all Communists think alike'; that the Soviet establishment is politically uniform; and therefore that no leader or faction can emerge to challenge the status quo. In reality, that establishment, including the Communist Party, has long been deeply divided over fundamental political and ideological issues, and especially over the desirability of large-scale change in the system inherited from Stalin.

● The second factor is indigenously American. It is the widespread opinion that nothing short of democratisation qualifies as 'meaningful' change in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev's abolition of the Stalinist mass terror did not lead to democracy, but it liberated millions of people from Gulag labour camps and exile, and reunited them with their families. If successful, Gorbachev's economic and social policies will improve the lives of tens of millions of Soviet citizens. And yet, many American commentators dismiss the significance of such changes because, to cite A. M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times*, they are not 'even faintly good enough for you and me'.

● The third factor is the instinctive American habit of judging Soviet internal developments largely by objectionable Soviet behaviour abroad, which is the main focus of US media coverage. Most Americans still remember Khrushchev, for example, not as a great reformer but as a menacing leader who put Soviet missiles in Cuba. Similarly, much American commentary today implies that Gorbachev will be a real reformer only if he ends the Soviet Union's role as a superpower and capitulates to the United States in world affairs. A nation's foreign policy does reveal something about its political system, but it is not the only criterion. If it were, we would have to judge the American system solely by its behaviour in Vietnam and Nicaragua.

● American institutions and groups have for years zealously promoted and thrived on the popular image of an unchanged and unchangeable Soviet Union. They include the military-industrial complex, legions of professional cold warriors and self-described national security intellectuals, certain Jewish organisations and an array of other special interests. Any acknowledged improvement in the Soviet system threatens their political, economic and idelogical well-being. Collectively, these cold war forces exercise enormous influence on American perceptions and politics, and there are virtually no anti-cold war lobbies strong enough to offset them.

● Finally, there is an even larger and more complex legacy of the decades-long cold war. America, it seems, has developed a deep psychological need for an immutably ugly Soviet Union in order to minimise or obscure its own imperfections. How often do we say, for example, that while we may practice some social injustices at home, everything is much worse in the Soviet Union? Or while we may be behaving badly in Nicaragua, the Russians are doing much worse in Afghanistan? Or that our nuclear plants are not as unsafe as Soviet ones? If America does not need an evil empire in the East to feel better about itself, nothing but Gorbachev or any Soviet reformer may do is likely to matter. Indeed, future historians, if there are any, may wonder how authoritarian Soviet behaviour came to be a moral and political standard for democratic America.

Stephen F. Cohen

Stephen F. Cohen is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

Shortening odds

THE *Independent*'s front page headline last week, 'Labour gains send jitters through City', was heartening news indeed. Opinion polls are one thing; but when City money starts taking fright at them there must be something in it. The smart money is also flooding back to Labour at the bookmakers'. Labour has picked up five points in our Tick Tack Index based on bookies' odds, over the week. Ladbroke have shortened the odds on Labour winning the most seats dramatically from 6 to 1 against to 7 to 2. Labour loyalists will get the best return out of Coral, still quoting Labour at 5 to 1 this Tuesday.

If Labour's being the largest party after the election overtaxes your socialist optimism, but you're prepared to believe the Tories won't win a majority, the odds on a hung parliament have shortened too, but you can still triple your money with William Hill, quoting 3 to 1 against a hung parliament.

The City itself, which likes to bet on the precise number of seats each party will win, has marked Labour up 20 seats since last week. The Tories are down 15 seats and the Alliance down five. The average of the seats quoted by City Index and IG Index were Tories 354, Labour 234, Alliance 42.

John Rentoul

NEWSTATESPERSON

Learning hard in Lewisham

LEWISHAM EAST, though socially variable, is a melancholy place. The falling rain seems to be at home there; and Russell Profitt in a moment of wild candour admits to relaxing by reading travel brochures about warmer places.

At its centre, Lewisham is dingy and characterless. The shops look like they cater to rather poor people. The constituency runs from Catford to the boundaries of Bromley; but paradoxically in its northern part includes a tranche of Blackheath, that desirable residential area which is South London's answer to Hampstead. This of course makes the seat contiguous to Greenwich, home of golden Rosie Barnes and of Deirdre Wood, answer to the anti-Labour prayers.

It would be possible to overstress the affinities, since the Conservatives in the witty and affable person of Colin Moynihan, rather incredibly, hold this seat. The SDP candidate, Wendy Stone, starts from the sort of third place percentage — 22 per cent which, betwixt a sitting Tory and a great bloc of council housing, looks in a general election better material for a squeeze than a launch. Greenwich serves to underline the fact that Russell Profitt's handicap may not be his blackness but his left-wing reputation: but he is a very different sort of candidate to Dierdre Wood who compounded her jactatory Sinn Fein-welcoming, ultra leftism with a weepie self-pity.

Russell Profitt is a superior article, shrewd, stylish and lucid. Most important of all, he has roots well-bedded in the borough. A resident for 20 years, he was on the council for 12 of them, though he no longer sits and there are charges that he was not notably popular in his time as deputy leader of the Council. A product of Goldsmiths', he was a primary school teacher in Lewisham and his wife still teaches at a local seconcdary school. Described by a colleague as 'rowing quietly but with notable speed into the mainstream', Profitt is at his strongest on local issues and at his most vulnerable for things said and done outside the constituency. He has a lower profile on black sections than most well-known black Labour politicians and he is not the man for self-immolating auto-slurges in the approved manner of Bernie Grant.

Though still discreet on the extent of his esteem for Neil Kinnock — 'Let's say he's doing a good job' — Profitt shows discernible signs of turning into a good quality conventional politician. That is no slighting observation. If by a mastery of bread-and-butter politics or — since the emphasis here is on health — of lint-and-hernia politics, a black candidate can get himself into Parliament in the ordinary boring way of British elections, more may have been done for the black public than will be achieved by any amount of glass-breaking rhetoric.

Certainly, Profitt is trying to play it that way. He is quoted in the local press as organising a petition to block closures of the 'Well Women clinics', as monitoring the effect upon south

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London health care of the shrinking number of beds at Guy's, St Olave's, St John's and Lewisham Hospitals. The headlines are all that a good candidate could ask for: 'Labour's fury over health service cuts', 'Bed Cuts Campaign', 'support for the carers' and 'Labour's health pledge'.

According to Kevin Flack, the relaxed and friendly agent, the local health authority (which in constituency terms involves all three Lewisham seats and Bermondsey/Southwark) has the second longest waiting list in London, standing at 8,500. Specifically, they are concerned with bed loss or ward closures at Hither Green and New Cross and with Sydenham children's hospital.

Like a good many Labour candidates, Profitt is also having grim fun with the hypothetical effect of Mr Rifkind's poll tax if it should come south in a 'radical Tory drive'. 'The rates bill standing at £540 would leap under a poll tax, to £1,854 for a family of three adults and £2,500 for a family of four', says Flack with melancholy satisfaction.

'We gave up looking for lace curtains years ago,' says Susan Williams-Walker, the gentle-mannered Conservative agent. And indeed, although the St Mildred's ward is exclusively Tory and the Downham, Grove Park and Churchdown estates as strongly Labour, Colin Moynihan could never have been elected without substantial working-class support. For those concerned with black political prospects, Lewisham East may provide clinical conditions for testing. Neither Colin Moynihan nor his agent are the sort of people who would tolerate for a second even the most genteel exploitation of prejudice; and Profitt agrees that relations with the local Conservatives are civil and good. Labour has in its candidate both a sophisticated campaigner on the issues and a fully paid-up local man. Then again, his is a preponderantly working-class, not very privileged wedge of done-down, anonymous South London with more than enough motives for supporting Labour.

The seat should usefully be compared and contrasted with Hemel Hempstead (or 'Hertfordshire West' under its latest alias). In 1983, what had been estimated after redistribution as a Labour marginal — one from which the sitting Tory, Nicholas Lyell, had taken flight — turned in the hands of Paul Boateng, a black Livingstonian from the GLC, into a Conservative majority of 9,000 . . . over the Alliance! Boateng came a wretched third with 13,000 — 22.3 per cent of the vote. Was he trashed as a black candidate or as a man identified with the far left? Again the local Conservative fought a scrupulous campaign, untinged by any hint of racism but bit hard and often at the GLC, vastly less popular then than its later days of playing Christian martyr to Mrs Thatcher's Diocletian. But above all, Boateng in Hemel was an incomer and something of a putschist having, at a late and controversial selection conference, edged out a well-regarded former member, Robin Corbett (ironically elected elsewhere).

Profitt has no such problems in the borough of Lewisham. His candidacy was briefly controversial with the National Executive because of his support for black sections. But being local he has known how to renovate the local party and concentrate on issues which count in Lewisham.

No one can ever say what quantum of simple racist motivation is to be found in a given place, but for the record, ten blacks (out of a Labour representation of 50) sit on the borough council — covering a larger catchment of course. Anstey Rice, also a black, registered a vote marginally higher than his white colleague in the two places won in the last ILEA elections. But Ganana Pragasan, considered by shrewd and impartial observers the ablest candidate, heavily underperformed — finishing a poor third. Race apparently tells harder against Asians here than Afro Caribbeans.

What may be at issue is the candidate's role *outside* Lewisham. The humour and practical campaigner for more hospital beds in his constituency is also advisor on race relations to Brent Borough Council. The antics of Richard Sachse and Sunil Engineer on Brent Education Committee attracted prime-time television coverage, and the Conservative Party may be seen gratefully cupping its hands whenever the name of Brent is spoken. A recent correspondent in the *Guardian* letters column observed: 'I have just heard Kenneth Baker speak for four minutes without mentioning Brent. Is this a record?'

When Brent comes up, Profitt, admirably specific and sharp-edged on every welfare topic, grows miasmal and generalised. On the one hand, 'much of what was said on that programme (*Panorama*) was lies', though he doesn't specify; on the other, 'mistakes have been made and, ah, things have been done which might have been done more wisely'. He sounds a little bit like Willie Whitelaw trying to talk his party out of the Westland affair. That, come to think of it, is not a bad general metaphor for Profitt himself, who admits to a working respect for a number of wet Tories, notably Peter Walker. The Brent people are his colleagues (employers actually) and he has to stand by them even though they have indulged in an unengaging spot of tyranny. Then again, he made his name as a dangerous and incendiary fellow and is consequently torn between old loyalties and new imperatives.

My own impression is of a hardworking, intelligent, increasingly realistic politician who has found the nuts and bolts of housing, education and health deeply rewarding and who is engrossed in helping to make the local election machine work (numbers are up — a membership of a thousand with 50 pre-election recruitments).

If he should succeed he will have made a point of which he might once not have approved — that the proper path for a black politician is politics rather than a preoccupation with blackness. He has conscientiously done a proper job. If he is now beginning to play down a particularist stance, that will be called opportunism only by those failing to recognise maturity. Only a fool would call the result of this election against an attractive and thoughtful Conservative. But both Profitt and Flack are delighted to be part of the data for the 60-seat poll of marginals which first showed Labour recovering. It will be a very hard seat to win, but past rhetoric is a greater part of the obstacle than racial identity. However, Profitt is a road runner with a highly respectable time in the London marathon and he has been training for *this* event for some time. He should at least be recognised as a serious politician running (and learning) hard.

Ed Pearce

If the caption fits

No. 19

Another test of the surefootedness of your humour: as we go to press Denis Healey seems to be muscling his way back into power. Captions or think bubbles for the above picture have to reach this office early, by Friday 5 June, for publication in our special pre-election issue available on the Tuesday before polling day, by which time the opinion polls could be *anywhere*. £10 must be won.

No. 17: winner

'Strange. I thought I had planted potatoes.' *(Sandy Balfour, London SE22.)* Hon menshes for: Young Harry (giggling): 'My big brother says you've got a National Gallery on your bum.' *(Chas. F. Garvey, Peacehaven.)* Charles: 'Never say Di!' *(George Cowley, Worcester.)*

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PETER KELLNER

Can Thatcher succeed where Churchill failed?

WHENEVER the Tories try to frighten voters off supporting Labour, you can rely on the *Daily Express* to lead the scaremongers' chorus. Thus: 'Mrs Thatcher exposed last night the full dangers that face the people of Britain if Tony Benn and his caucus of 25 on the Socialist Party executive come to power. Those dangers are three: 1. Rule by an obscure committee instead of responsible Ministers. 2. "Let me tell you it would rob the wage-earner of his personal freedom to an extent unknown." 3. Foreign affairs darkened and obscured by back-room influence.'

You smell a rat? Quite right. The *Express* hasn't run that story in this campaign. It ran it on 22 June 1945, at the height of that year's election campaign. I have simply changed 'Mr Churchill' to 'Mrs Thatcher' and 'Professor Laski' to 'Tony Benn' (Laski's precise equivalent as chairman of today's national executive is Syd Tierney of the shopworkers' union, but even the *Express* would find it hard to turn Tierney into a bogey figure.)

Mrs Thatcher has followed a long and dishonourable tradition in deciding to attack Labour the way she has this week. On Monday she condemned the party's 'iceberg manifesto', and said that it left out all the nasty things Labour would do. A Conservative Party advertisement at the weekend listed some these: Labour would 'take over construction, defence, aerospace and oil industries', 'nationalise all independent schools', 'put the police under the operational control of local politicians' and so on.

It is true that last autumn's party conference approved these policies. They were all passed on a show of hands; no votes were taken. Yet none of these proposals appear in Labour's election manifesto. Hence Mrs Thatcher's 'iceberg'. I have no doubt that she, and her supporters in what we used to call Fleet Street, are already planning a series of 'exposés' about Labour's true intentions.

If they are wise, they will delve into their yellowing, 42-year-old cuttings (or, if these are not readily available, visit the Newspaper Library at Colindale: it's easy to get to, just one minute's walk from the tube station). This exercise might, just possibly, cause them to hold back. To save them the bother, this is what they would find.

TWO WEEKS before polling day in 1945, Winston Churchill warned of what life would be like if Labour came to power. In an election broadcast, he conjured up an image of Clement Attlee as a prisoner of Labour's conference policy, with the chairman of Labour's national executive, Harold Laski, acting as Attlee's jailer:

> Now it seems we must refer to an obscure committee and be governed by unrepresentative persons, and that they will share the secrets and give orders to the so-called Ministers of the Crown, who will appear on the benches of Parliament and deliver orations upon which they have been instructed, not from their own heart and conscience, not even from their constituencies, but from these dim conclaves below.
>
> The central Government is to plan for all our lives and tell us exactly what we are to do. And any resistance to their commands will be punished. The central executive authority could not allow itself to be challenged or defeated at any time. And I tell you that the freedom of the wage-earner to choose or change his employment, or to use collective bargaining by all means, including the right to strike, runs absolutely counter to the Socialist doctrine and theory of the State.

It was the kind of stuff to get the right-wing papers salivating. The *Daily Express*'s front-page headline read: OBSCURE LASKI CAUCUS WILL GIVE ORDERS. (Obscure? Labour's national executive? Maybe Tory leaders and sub-editors were even more ignorant then than they are today.) And the paper, in other headlines, toughened up Churchill's language: 'Wage earners lose the right to strike. Churchill explains how the Socialists would run Britain: Do this, do that; go here, go there — or you will be punished'.

Attlee responded the following week by explaining to reporters that Laski and the national executive had no powers to dictate anything to the Parliamentary Labour Party. To suggest anything else, he said, 'is an absolute ramp put up by people who pretend not to understand'.

> ***It is the Tories who are more open to the charge of an "iceberg manifesto" than Labour. Their 1983 manifesto didn't mention many things they have done in the past four years***

Churchill, however, refused to let go. At the centre of his argument was a visit he planned to make to Berlin, accompanied by Attlee. The intention was that Attlee, who had been Churchill's deputy Prime Minister in the wartime coalition, should attend with all the authority of a potential Prime Minister, able to commit his party to any agreements Churchill and he entered into. Laski, however, said that Attlee should attend only as an observer, and report back to the national executive; in Laski's view, Attlee was not empowered to sign any agreements on Labour's behalf.

THREE DAYS before polling day, Churchill wrote a remarkable letter to Attlee. Quoting various campaign speeches by Laski, he concluded:

> We have learnt a good deal more than we knew before about the powers vested in the national executive committee, of which Mr Laski is the undisputed chairman. It certainly appears that they are very wide in their terms and, from your silence, very real. It would appear that a Labour or Socialist government would be subject to the directions of this committee, and that matters of foreign affairs and also, I presume, if they desired it, military affairs, would have to be submitted to them.

Attlee replied with a summary of the relationship between the national executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party that holds good today:

> Naturally, there are consultations between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Committee. No elector will be in the least surprised to hear that this is the case. . . [However] at no time, and in no circumstances, has the National Executive Committee ever sought to give or given instructions to the Parliamentary Labour Party arising out of the consultations.

That exchange was reported verbatim by *The Times* on its main news page, under the four-deck headline: 'CONTROL OF LABOUR PARTY POLICY: Mr Churchill's charges: Powers of National Executive Committee: Reply by Mr Attlee'. The following day — election eve — *The Times* again made this issue its lead story: 'Mr Churchill renews his charges: "Very important points unanswered": Exchanges at Midnight'.

The Times, which then aspired to be a paper of record, devoted its story to the texts of what Churchill, Attlee, Laski and Herbert Morrison had said, with the minimum of interpretation. Churchill continued to insist that a Labour Prime Minister would be controlled by the NEC. His letter arrived at Attlee's home in Stanmore at 11.30pm; shortly after midnight, Attlee replied. 'Much of your trouble', he wrote, 'is due to your not understanding the distinction between the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party. This leads you to confuse the organisational work of the party with the actions of the Parliamentary Labour Party.'

Attlee concluded by telling Churchill, 'you underestimate the intelligence of the public'; and so it proved, when Labour won its biggest-ever victory.

It is the Tories who are more open to the charge of possessing an 'iceberg manifesto' than Labour. Their 1983 manifesto contained no mention of a number of things they have done during the past four years, such as: introduce a poll tax in Scotland, reduce the value of the state earnings-related pension scheme, end teachers' negotiating rights and abolish the death and maternity grants.

Labour's rules are far clearer than the Conservatives'. Labour's '*Programme*' consists of policies 'adopted by the party conference by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes recorded on a card vote' (Clause V, Party constitution). That immediately rules out most of the Tories' 'iceberg' claims. But even that programme does not commit Labour in office. A joint meeting of the NEC and the shadow cabinet 'shall decide which items from the party programme shall be included in the manifesto'. Everything else falls by the wayside. Churchill affected not to understand this simple point. Mrs Thatcher is following in his footsteps. We shall see whether her silly tactics succeed any better than his. □

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ECONOMICS

Tory plan to tax the floating voter

John Rentoul

DENIS HEALEY says that if underdogs Coventry can win the FA Cup, then Labour can win the general election. In which case the poll tax could be a Tory own goal to match Gary Mabbutt's extra-time thriller.

Already Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley has appeared to make a U-turn by softening the burden of the planned tax on the 9 million people who depend on social security. When Ridley said benefits would be increased to take account of the one-fifth of the poll tax that claimants would have to pay, on *Newsnight* last week, his amazed shadow Jack Cunningham demanded: 'When has that been said?' (It had been sneaked out in a Commons written reply at the end of the parliamentary session.)

To sort out some of the confusion: there are three separate measures involved in 'the poll tax', each one a vote-loser. First, there is the one-fifth minimum payment, which the Conservatives want to bring in next April. This requires social security claimants to pay at least one-fifth of their rates bill. Second is the poll tax, officially called the 'community charge', intended to replace rates in Scotland in April 1989, and in the rest of the UK later. People on social security will have to pay one-fifth of that, too. Third, there is the 'uniform business rate', a new national tax on non-residential property.

Ridley has retreated on the first measure. Previously, ministers had refused to say whether the one-fifth minimum was going to have to come out of social security benefits, or whether and by how much benefits might be increased to offset the one-fifth payment. Ridley has now promised that benefits will be raised by the same as the average one-fifth payment.

> ***'The only ways to avoid a poll tax are by committing suicide, emigrating or cheating'***

The idea, as Norman Tebbit so bluntly put it, is that:

> If the person concerned lives in a good Tory borough, their average amount will more than pay their community charge. If they live in one of the less happy boroughs, they may find that it's rather more difficult. But that is a decision of the local authority — whether it overcharges them or not.

That Labour councils have to spend more because they tend to have more old people and more social security claimants living in their area does not trouble Tebbit's conscience greatly. The engineering of 'winners and losers' among people on social security abolishes the principle of Supplementary Benefit as a national minimum income below which it would be uncivilised to allow people to fall. So, not only are Labour councils to be blamed for rates increases forced on them by the withdrawal of central government grant, now they are to be blamed for pushing those dependent on social security deeper into poverty.

What the one-fifth minimum would mean in practice is almost impossible to work out. Rough sums based on official figures for last year suggest that the average claimant in inner London will be 72p a week worse off, or £1.28 a week worse in Camden; and if there are any in Torridge, Devon, they'll be 47p a week better off on average. But these averages conceal wide variations, adverse ones adding injury to insult for householders surviving on disposable incomes of £30.40 a week.

THERE IS far worse to come. If the conscience of the comfortable isn't enough to lose Tory votes, then their self-interest is, and the poll tax itself is bound to produce more losers than winners. Although the government has been unforthcoming about how the tax may be operated in practice, most ordinary floating voters can grasp the basic idea. Its simplicity was one of its attractions for the Conservative Party; but it is the simplicity of the Chingford bootboy.

In the case of all but one of existing taxes in this country, you have to pay tax more or less in proportion to your ability to pay, or progressively — that is, the higher your income or wealth the higher the proportion taken in tax. The amount of VAT you pay, for instance, depends on the amount you spend. The exception is duty on tobacco, which poor smokers pay just as much as rich ones. But you can — theoretically at least — give up smoking. The only ways to avoid a poll tax are by committing suicide, emigrating or cheating.

Every adult not on Supplementary Benefit in a local council area would have to pay the same amount of poll tax — possibly £420 a year in Camden, Hackney, Lambeth and Lewisham, but averaging £205 last year (Environment Department figures). Hence two-people households will be worse off unless they are in a well-above-averagely expensive house, liable to well-above-average rates. For example, Mr and Mrs Thatcher would save about £2,000 a year on their half-million-pound Dulwich house. Former Tory Environment Minister Sir George Young commented:

> It may make sense in Scotland, where the party's vote hovers around 20 per cent and where the new system will bring quick relief to the faithful. [But] while my own rates would have gone down from over £2,000 to around £400, many voters in marginal seats would inevitably have to pay more (*Public Services and Local Government*, January 1987.)

Perhaps the impact of a poll tax hasn't yet sunk in because no one can believe that Margaret Thatcher, allegedly so direct in stoking the self-interest of the marginal social classes, so skilled at electoralism, can be proposing what amounts to a tax on floating voters. And putting it in the manifesto.

If taxing Mr and Mrs Average more heavily weren't bad enough, a poll tax brings in its wake a whole raft of other unintended and undesirable effects. It worsens the poverty trap, it is an administrative horror, it requires a national business rate and it will put up house prices, increasing the divide between north and south, and between home owners and tenants.

The Conservatives have acknowledged that it would be twice as expensive to collect, it would put up water rates, it would discourage people from registering to vote (there would be a separate register, but nothing to prevent the *News of the World* from checking it against the electoral roll) and the government has already accepted that there will be 10 per cent evasion (as opposed to 1 per cent with rates).

Evasion is only part of the problem. A survey by Scottish local councils, published last month, found that many young people, especially students and those living in hostels, had no experience of making monthly payments. Half didn't have a bank account. One in eight claimed to own nothing worth £20 or more, making it impossible for councils to recover defaulted poll tax payments.

The easiest way for councils to collect the one-fifth of rates, and then the poll tax, from poor council tenants would be to deduct it directly from their housing benefit (paid by the DHSS to the council to cover rent and rates for Supplementary Benefit claimants). The burden of administering housing benefit is already too much for some councils, especially those which are ratecapped and which have large claimant populations. Direct deduction would also fail to pin the blame for benefit cuts on the local Labour council, and yet separate collection, presumably by door-to-door heavies, would be even more expensive.

And the attempt to produce the 'Tebbit effect' — a sharply higher tax in 'high-spending' (that is, Labour) councils — has some bizarre consequences. As one council protested:

> An underestimate by central government of the incidence of inflation of only 1 per cent will result in the demand for the community charge to rise by 4 per cent. There can be no effective local accountability with that sort of gearing.

As greater local accountability was the whole point of the exercise in the first place, that comment, from Tory-controlled Perth and Kinross council, would seem to complete the demolition job.

> ***'No one can believe that Margaret Thatcher, allegedly so direct in stoking the self-interest of the marginal social classes, so skilled at electoralism, can be proposing what amounts to be a tax on floating voters. And putting it in the manifesto'***

The opposition parties are even allowed the luxury of not having to propose what should be done instead. A poll tax is so awful that any alternative looks sensible: all Labour has to do is insist sternly that there are no easy answers to the problem of rates and offer to consider a local income tax, which is party policy, but not in the manifesto. □

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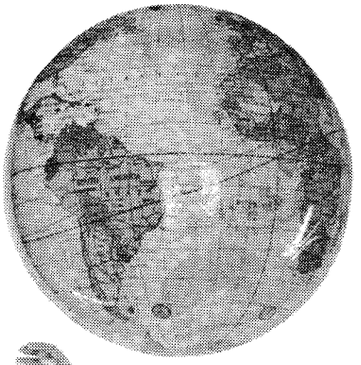

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The triumph of the spirit of war

SARAH BENTON *reports on the woman who wants a third term*

HOW DOES a dull, undistinguished, prissy, not very popular young girl change in her own lifetime to become one of the world's most famous political leaders? A Prime Minister set to break all modern records and determined to leave the world stage only when she can exchange mere secular office for the holy station, 'mother of the nation'? The answer lies not in the intrinsic greatness of Margaret Thatcher, despite the best efforts of her most devoted biographers to trace in her some extraordinary inner essence. Rather it lies in her relationship with us, the people living through these peculiar political times.

Thirteen years ago, the British political system still appeared as though it would never change. It still seemed to be the famous, stable two-party system, based on class, which had been so highly praised as the model of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s. Textbooks were written on how such a system could and would win out through any amount of economic or social disarray. Thirteen years ago Margaret Thatcher still firmly believed that no woman could be Prime Minister in her lifetime and she was still seen as the prim and proper, unimaginative politician who earned her place in the Cabinet through her unenvied ability to master a brief and manage her men.

Thirteen years ago, Margaret Thatcher had not even made a great mark as Education Secretary. Her most famous policy decision, to end free school milk, she inherited from Iain MacLeod. But she was one of the small number of people, including M15 it seems, for whom the humiliating double defeat of the Tories in 1974 was not to be borne.

The conformist

Until this point there is no relationship of note between her and party, class or even ideology. She had none of the populist manner she has developed since; no woman with political ambition would have risked ridicule by proffering platitudes about poppies, patriotism and the family budget as a political platform. Cloistered inside a snobbish party and class, she was trying to live down her provincial shopkeeper past, and had not yet learned how to exploit it and indeed rewrite her own history. She had swapped her childhood Methodism and religiosity for the establishment rites of the Church of England and if she harboured a resentment against the superior gents who ran her party she wasn't letting on. She conformed assiduously.

She, like the rest of the Tory cabinet, did not then realise that the deferential working-class vote which they had courted since the 1870s had given way to the militant reaction of the petty bourgeoisie.

Rex Features

An 'instinct' for governing? A confident Mrs Thatcher sets her sights on a third election victory

Yet in those days in 1974 she *did* still listen, and she listened carefully, to parliamentary critics of Heath, to Sir Keith Joseph, to Alfred Sherman and Alan Walters, to admirers at the *Spectator*, to Aims of Industry and the Institute of Directors, to the Institute of Economic Affairs and assorted businessmen. It was not a long dark night of the intellectual soul; unlike Joseph she did not, says Lord Harris of the Institute of Economic Affairs, bear away their reading matter on the ideas of foreign economists like Hayek, von Mises or Friedman.

But she got the gist. She listened more closely than other contenders for the leadership for the

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undertones of discontent which alone could carry her ahead of the mainstream of Conservatism represented by James Prior and William Whitelaw. Her support was forged in the fringes of the top circle, not in the heart of it, but certainly not at the grassroots, either. The relationships which launched her on her path to greatness were with small, little-known groups of politically motivated men; the group around the newly formed Centre for Policy Studies on the ideology side, and with Airey Neave on the organisational side. When she stood against Heath in the first ballot for party leader no one, except Neave and his adjutants, expected her to win.

But she had already been identified as the person with the courage to insist that political will could carry through the revolution in policy which Heath had promised but so publicly failed to carry out. It was this belief in political will, represented through a courageous personality, which marked her out. Others had urged the mix of monetarism and rolling back the socialist state before Mrs Thatcher took up the cry. Others had offered themselves as champions of the cause, notably Enoch Powell and Keith Joseph. Neither could forge the crucial relationship with middle England, Powell foundering on race and Joseph on sex.

Mrs Thatcher did not need to learn from their mistakes; neither rhetorical histrionics laced with Latin references nor public musings on eugenic sociology is her style. She has absolutely no interest in social theory nor does she have, says Andrew Roth of Parliamentary Profiles, a personal history of strongly felt racism — though she has a quick ear for its political value.

For the Tory MPs who had to choose a leader, Margaret Thatcher was an acceptable champion. Her job was to create a political will to win for the threatened ethic of capitalism. People said at the time and historians have said since that her victory as leader stunned and astonished Britain. Tory MPs seemed to have taken an incomprehensible risk in choosing a woman, and a little known woman, one primarily remembered for being 'mousy' by her Oxford head of college. It just goes to show how strongly but silently those MPs wanted the fight back to begin; shows too why the leader they chose has put such high value on her political will, and why those round her have so strongly nurtured it. That's what they got her for.

Not one of them

Since then, politics has appeared to change beyond recognition. But nothing appears to have changed so much as Margaret Thatcher herself. She has been infused with and enormously energised by uninhibited self-confidence and a sense of her own power. The confidence didn't come from her Shadow Cabinet, most of whom she inherited from Heath. They disparaged her behind her back for not being 'one of them', male, upper-middle-class, educated in the social sciences and, says Jock Bruce-Gardyne, later a Treasury Minister, 'indulged in analyses of her character as the port was circulating'; thus stripped and probed, she no doubt seemed more manageable.

The relationships from which she drew her new confidence were initially the same as those which had got her into power at first, then increasingly the party rank-and-file, to whom she had unprecedented access as party leader. This was not, however, inevitable. Unlike Ted Heath, and even more unlike many of her 'wet' opponents, who treat the party with a disregard amounting to disdain, she attended, and still attends, party gatherings with a whole-hearted attention and enthusiasm. They liked what they heard, and she blossomed with their approval.

> ***'It is part of Mrs Thatcher's trick that she appears to be above party; people who wouldn't vote for "them", the nobs' party, the bosses and landlords' preservation party, will vote for her. A third of those planning to vote Tory say this is because of their leader'***

However, it has been the exercise of power which has most transformed her: in news footage of 1979 she has an air of diffidence and dowdiness which has now quite disappeared. The change has been dramatic because she is a woman. A man is more likely to start off with authority and the confidence that goes with that; if he feels doubt he is more likely to conceal it with bravado or aggression. An access of self-confidence is less likely to transform him as it did Mrs Thatcher. In the last ten years we have seen her, time and again, rescued from political ineptitude or weakness by an infusion of confidence in her own power from a party conference, a successful war, a large meeting and, most recently, by her exchange with Gorbachev.

The years in which she has grown from an uninspired Education Secretary to a Prime Minister who hobnobs boisterously with the President of the Soviet Union are years in which conventional political relationships have fractured, giving unprecedented authority to a national leader. For it is part of Mrs Thatcher's trick that she appears to be above party; people who wouldn't vote for 'them', the nobs' party, the bosses and landlords' preservation party, will vote for her. A third of those planning to vote Tory say this is because of their leader.

Their first election party broadcast seized the theme: once Britain stood alone against the foreign menace (wot, no Russia?); then the *foreign* (it stressed the foreign) menace of socialism invaded us. But the British people ended the dark chaos and elected a New Leader. Yes, we, the people, can triumph through the simple, passive act of choosing Thatcher as the incarnation of the national will.

In her speeches, she constantly evokes, not the party or the class, but the spirit of the British people to join with her, the spirit of a righteous war. Paradoxically, she needs to induce not a sense of safety (she frequently warns against complacency) but to keep alive the feeling that the battle is not yet won, that danger still lurks, that the threat, whether it's from criminals, marxists or backsliders, is ever present. Through her indomitable and bellicose spirit, we vicariously take up arms against it.

During these years Margaret Thatcher has progressed from being likened to the nanny, the governess, the Great Housekeeper into inviting comparisons with Boadicea, Britannia and, in a piece of lascivious adulation by Anthony Burgess, to Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom and of war. That last likeness, points out Marina Warner, is peculiarly apt: Athena, first maiden warrior, springs direct from her father, Zeus. Aeschylus has her declare:

> No mother gave me birth.
> I honour the male, in all things but marriage.
> Yes, with all my heart I am my Father's child.

A good psychological study would start with this, Mrs Thatcher's disavowal of her mother and idolatry of her father. But Mrs Thatcher's psychological make-up is not the point. Rather, it is what we make of her. What is the quality of her femaleness that gives her power both inside the committee room and on the national stage? Her combatants in political life are all male. When they speak of the difficulty in arguing effectively with her they are struggling to describe a situation almost unique in politics or indeed in the public world: a man arguing with a woman of higher

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status and authority. Yet they have to operate within rules of courtesy to a woman, though the rules were invented to govern the behaviour of men to the weaker sex. Of course, many men in their daily lives argue with powerful women. But at the end of the day they can ignore them, tell them to shut up, threaten them with violence, take sadistic pleasure in the end-of-the-day sexual vanquishing of the termagant or masochistic pleasure in their own defeat. That's in private.

No respect

In public, Margaret Thatcher gets away with humiliating scores of men. Sometimes she does it on purpose, a simple exercise in self-assertion. Sometimes it seems more inept. Lord Glanamara, aka ex-Labour minister Ted Short, told the radio series *The Thatcher Phenomenon* of the time she came to Cable and Wireless which he then chaired:

> She came to lunch with the directors, about a dozen well-informed, highly intellectual businessmen, and we started off a discussion, and throughout the whole lunch she wouldn't allow anybody to finish a sentence. She just chopped them off and sometimes got it wrong, sometimes anticipated the wrong question or wrong sentence.

Such accounts are legion as are anecdotes of the clumsy banality of her speeches. She has no innate delicacy of touch, no sensitive feminine respect for a man's precious amour propre. No deft feminine 'instinct' in any of that.

Andrew Roth is one of many men who says firmly: 'She's not a woman. She's a man in drag.' Yet hardly a man, in the library of books and commentaries on her, has found it possible to account for her without using the word 'instinct'. They say, over and over, that her political thrust comes not from the intellect nor from the wisdom of her advisers, but from something infinitely more mysterious and unknowable, something which no mere man can argue with: her instinct. She does not need to depend on the banks of professional men with their stores of knowledge on how to govern for she can summon up her own private powerhouse in her instinct.

It all feeds the myth that she is not a real party politician. But in fact she seems to have done no more than discover exactly what many women discovered through the women's movement: that hitherto private feelings and fantasies can, once uttered, strike an unexpected public resonance. Her private feeling that one had to work hard, jolly hard to get what one wanted, that no one was going to help one, that one wasn't going to be held back by feelings of guilt about the common herd if striving would set one apart from them.

Once party leader, freed from the rules of accepted political speech, she discovered that instinct can speak unto instinct. 'Deep in their instincts', she told the *Sunday Times* in 1980, 'they find what I am saying and doing right, and I know it is, because that is the way I was brought up. I'm eternally grateful for the way I was brought up in a small town. We knew everyone, we knew what people felt.' The faintly condescending 'we' here must be her and her father; not, despite her explosive indignation at being thought to have a privileged background, a working-class family on the breadline. Her memory of poverty is evoked when she can be induced, with difficulty, to talk of her mother; it is the impoverishment of her relationship with her mother which comes through, for in comparison with 1930s Britain her family was not badly off. And her father was the leading citizen of that small town. That is the richness she remembers when she now speaks warmly of her past.

On a pedestal

No doubt it was a restrained and repressive past too, an 'instinctive' association with Victorian values. Difficult as it is to envisage her thrashing about nakedly with someone (a test of the imagination that should be applied to all public persons) there are men who perceive in her a sexual power. Mitterrand said she had 'eyes like Caligula and the mouth of Marilyn Monroe'. Gorbachev clearly got a charge. Anthony Burgess says she has it: 'The masochist in all men responds to the aggressive woman, and recognises that her charm lies in the appearance of velvet and the reality of iron.'

In the same issue of *You* magazine, Patrick Cosgrave, devoted admirer, tells of her doing a mock night-club act at a Cambridge University common room. 'She threaded a finger through the hanging loop of the jacket and slung it over her shoulder. "Questions?" she asked, and the audience would have died for her.' The story was a good deal less prostately admiring the first time he told it in his first biography of her. But most who have met her agree she does not flirt and that she has no overt sexual self-presentation. If men feel it, it is something in them responding to her power which they can shape into as tormenting an autocratic empress as they wish.

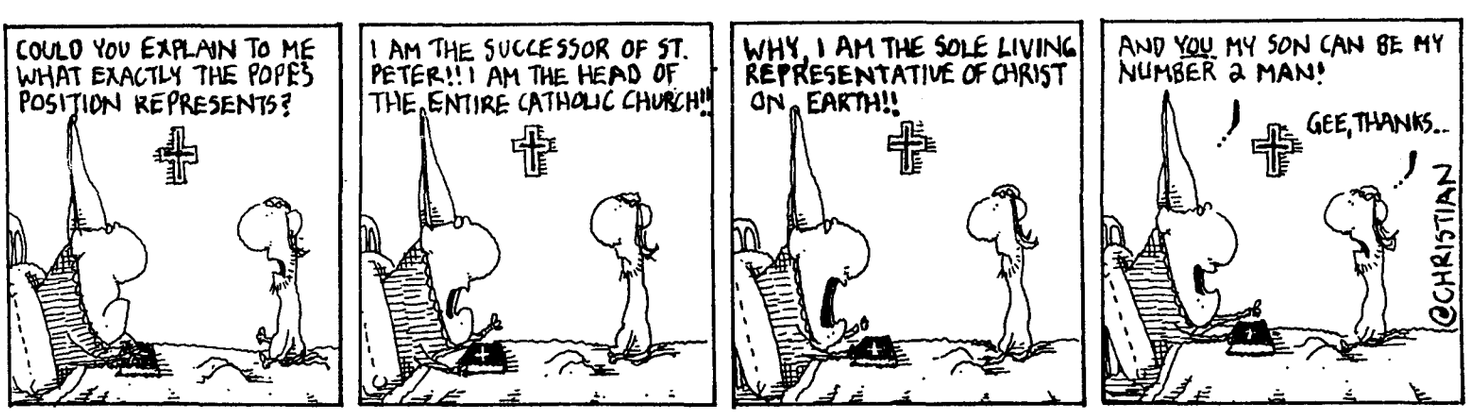
Perhaps it is the aura of a repressed sexuality which explains her failure as a populist. She emanates a 'don't touch me' feeling, an anxiety about any closeness that might make her vulnerable which means she has none of the relaxed, folksy charm of Reagan. Her tongue may speak popular, home-grown homilies. Her manner and tone speak an artificial, condescending hauteur entrenching, for all the efforts of her image advisers, a gulf between her and the people. She doesn't want them, us, any closer. She works best on a pedestal, as homely and as untouchable as the Virgin Mary. For the millions who loathe her with a rare passion, it's as much for that personal manner as for any of the collective policies produced by the team.

If her populism is restricted by her manner, so it is by the energy she devoted to being a professional party politician. In many of her public appearances she is not 'herself' but a professional, dependent on the role to carry her through public engagements when she would not know who else to be. (Even meeting newlyweds in Hungary, remembers Andrew Roth, she acted the professional.) In private meetings, she is as much the calculating party politician as any predecessor, assessing how to gain tactical advantage.

YET THE key to Margaret Thatcher's relationship to her followers is the public eschewal of politics. All political considerations are converted into morality. Indeed, she banishes the political sphere as somehow tainted, socialist, striking chords with the many who find politics alien, possessed by the professionals, infinitely more remote than a simple morality. The world she wishes to defend on our behalf is not the political world. None of the political liberties, each trailing its long history of popular or legal battle, seems to mean anything to her.

Freedom, a word she uses constantly, seems to mean — well, what? Any practical application of freedom in Mrs Thatcher's usage dissolves on examination. It merely becomes an attractive synonym for preventing socialists acting to restrict the rich, or equalise conditions for the poor. She never talks of civil liberties, the key political defence against that overpowering state. And she never uses the word democracy except as a prong to reprove or provoke trade unions, the Soviet Union or the Nicaraguan government.

Professional politician she may be. But the key to her success is that, at a time when conventional political relationships are volatile and ineffectual, she appears to abolish politics. And there is more than an uncomfortable frisson of the far right in that. □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It was twenty years ago today, Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play.

On June 1st 1967 The Beatles released 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' and to mark the occasion Granada TV will be showing a major two-hour documentary on ITV entitled It Was Twenty Years Ago Today.

Much more than a tribute to The Beatles and their famous album, it is also a celebration of a year, its youth and its music.

1967 was the Year of the Hippie, of Peace, Flower Power and the Summer of Love. Of young people experimenting with new ways of living and seeking to create a better future.

Of marijuana and LSD and Dr. Timothy Leary exhorting us to 'Tune In, Turn On, and Drop Out'. A year of social, sexual and musical revolution.

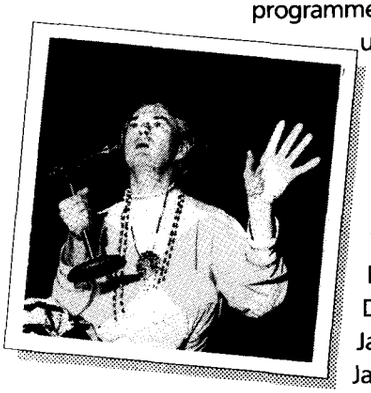
Above all it was a year of hope, with a spirit of freedom and liveliness that hasn't been seen before or since. A year when resistance and change seemed possible simply by making fun of the established order.

And at its heart was the music of Sgt. Pepper – the soundtrack for '67.

Now for the first time, this seminal year is explained by Granada TV – a company uniquely qualified to produce such an authoritative account. Not only did The Beatles come from the North West, but Granada TV were the first station ever to show them.

Our award-winning production teams have travelled the world talking to the people who made the year happen. People like Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Peter Fonda, Allen Ginsberg, Peter Coyote, Timothy Leary and members of The Byrds, Jefferson Airplane and the Mamas and the Papas.

And following agreement with EMI records (UK) and Picture Music International, this will be the only programme of its kind, worldwide, to use the music of Sgt. Pepper.



Of course, you will also be able to enjoy the year's other great music, including the sounds of Buffalo Springfield, The Byrds, The Doors, Bob Dylan, The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Ian, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, The Mamas and the Papas, Scott McKenzie, Pink Floyd, Procol Harum, Otis Redding, The Rolling Stones, Ravi Shankar, The Small Faces and The Who.

Stephen Stills wrote a lyric that summer. It said 'There's something happening here, what it is ain't exactly clear'.

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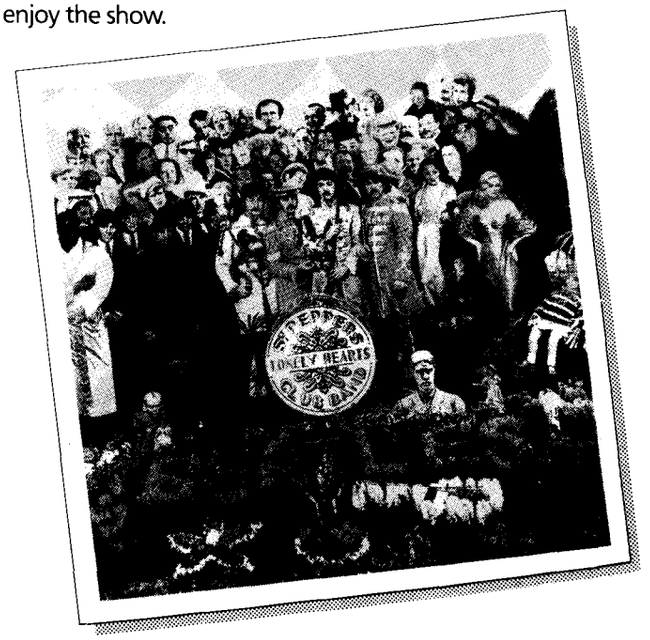

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MEDIA

The Japanisation of British politics

Akio Takahata

BRITAIN IS widely respected for the fact that it is the cradle of parliamentary democracy, giving birth to free and democratic principles for a modern politics now spread throughout the Western world. Yet now I can't but feel somewhat baffled, or even betrayed, with the current state of the British political scene. Because, although it is nearly five years since I arrived here as a Japanese newspaper correspondent, I have seen none of those things such as 'smooth and regular changes of government' or 'politics of consensus' under the famous two-party system that are supposed to provide political harmony.

Instead, the world has already seen eight straight years of Mrs Thatcher's reign, which may go unchallenged for another five, or (in her own words) even more, years. Is this an accidental gap between reality and textbook theory? Or is some more historical, more deep-rooted change happening to British society?

I started to wonder, on seeing two general elections being fought in five years, if we could dismiss this seemingly unique 'Thatcher phenomenon' merely as a one-time anomaly in the long history of British politics. If not, then I might call it, in a sense, a *Japanisation* of British political process.

I fear very much that the use of the world 'Japanisation' might sound a little presumptuous, which I don't intend. But I want to point to the fact that the post-war Japanese economic success has been achieved through and under largely consistent, if unexciting, conservative rule. And the choice now for the British people seems to be a similar one as we had faced before.

Of course it *is* presumptuous to suggest that peace and prosperity can only be brought about through conservative rule. The point is not whether it be a conservative, centrist or Labour, but rather the essential necessity of policy consistency to secure long-term political stability and economic predictability.

The Japanese people tend to become more sympathetic to the loser than to pay respect to the winner. This tendency in their national sentiment partly comes from natural magnanimity, but it also originates in our expectation to watch the loser's heroic fight-back to recapture the lost ground: if he succeeds in doing this, then it will give the story a happy ending.

Thus, it was the Labour Party in 1979 which was showered with sympathy and encouragement by many a Japanese watcher. But this sympathy is *not* unlimited, and it comes with one condition — that the loser learns from defeat, corrects mistakes and does his best to win in the return match. Then came another debacle in 1983, which turned out to be even worse than the first defeat. The policies in its manifesto did not appear realistic enough.

So it will be no surprise that the Labour Party, if it loses three times in a row, will inevitably suffer from a severe loss of public support and appeal. It even might fall further down into a state of 'eternal opposition', like its Japanese equivalent, the Japan Socialist Party.

I DON'T MEAN to overlook the significance of the shortcomings that are pointed out by the opposition parties as the price of Mrs Thatcher's success.

The so-called North-South divide, the gap beteen the haves and have-nots, or the schism between the employed and the unemployed are all issues serious enough to be tackled under any government. I am not inclined to believe simplistic arguments that these are all a result of Mrs Thatcher's divisive class politics and that we need to stand up for class wars, when I hear that less than 40 per cent of some trade unionists would vote Labour. I think it is important to make a distinction between what are inevitable costs, and what must have come from the leadership style and personality of Mrs Thatcher.

> ***'What about the ever-crowded shopping streets, the credit card boom and the obvious consumerism? I think that these happy faces are something the Labour Party or the Alliance need to explain to convince a foreign watcher to support their argument. If the British rate of unemployment were to come to my country it would automatically mean riots and social violence'***

It was widely popular, for example, to attribute every social schism and division in the country to Mrs Thatcher and her 'policy of confrontation' during the long and bitter miners' dispute. But looking back from today, I doubt who else could have done it differently, if he/she is the responsible leader determined to release the whole country and its economy from such a hostage situation dominated by a handful of extremist union leaders. The question should be asked whether these kinds of social evils could not have been caused under any other government which would have tried as much to cure 'English diseases' and revive the economy through radical restructuring of the society that were so much needed.

I was among the huge crowd at Wembley Stadium on 18 and 19 May, to watch the Cup Final and England v. Brazil, each of which saw a packed crowd of 100,000. This was just at the start of the early stages of the 'feverish' general election campaign, but no one seemed to care. No skirmishes or acts of hooliganism were reported. Each ticket cost £21-£30 at set price — two or three times more if you bought one from a road-side ticket-scalper. Yet the stadium was full of happy-looking plain folks, couples and families.

An unemployment rate of 11 per cent sounds serious enough, and I dare not underestimate the disgruntlement felt by British society as a whole. But I couldn't help wonder if what I saw there was not reality. If it was *not*, what about the ever-crowded shopping streets, the credit card boom and the obvious consumerism? I think that these happy faces and a supposedly strange calmness are something the Labour Party or the Alliance need to explain, in order to convince a foreign watcher to support their argument. If the British rate of unemployment were to come to my country (currently far less than 5 per cent), it would trigger a national tendency to panic, and would automatically mean riots and social violence happening all over the country.

MODERN parliamentary democracy was restored in Japan only after World War 2. Then the Japanese people had never had any experience of socialist government. They were given the choice of taking either economic and social stability or political 'adventure', and their choice was apparent, except for a couple of years in the beginning. Although they were taught the best traditions of British-style parliamentary democracy, including changing of government parties, the irony is that the Japanese themselves never put it into practice.

But it is also true that the conservatives in Japan have never been as radical as Mrs Thatcher's Tory party. They were more of a mixture of wider centrist and moderate forces, wets and doves, everything but socialists. They prefer the process of consensus to a strong leader (Mr Nakasone is an anomaly in this sense).

Thus, in comparison with what happened in Japan 40 years ago, the present choice for the British people seems to be a Catch 22. For those who wish to see socialist policies in a more modernised and realistically improved form, the Labour Party does not seem to offer enough.

I didn't support the Alliance, but at the same time was disappointed to see that their share of seats in proportion to that of the national vote had been unfairly small. I would not necessarily support the idea of introducing proportional representation in the Alliance manifesto. A practical alternative, in my opinion, could be an enlargement of some constituencies, or merger of a few small constituencies, so that two or more MPs are to be elected for each of 'enlarged' constituencies, as is commonly done in Japan. It would produce fewer wasted votes.

Anyway, in the present form the choice is very narrow, and may seem impossible for some. It is no wonder that there are still plenty of 'undecided' voters up and down the country. And it seems to me the result will be either a step into 'Japanisation' (a long term for Mrs Thatcher and her successor on the one hand and 'eternal oppositions' on the other) or a hung parliament (if the Alliance is lucky enough). Either way it will surely be something historic in this country. □

Akio Takahata has been London correspondent of Mainichi Newspapers for the past five years.

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'Just cash the cheques and get away with the minimum'

Imagine a business where the less you produce, and the fewer customers you have, the more money you make. At the centre of the industry is a price-fixing agreement in which five powerful companies carve up the market between them. It is an agreement which is almost certainly illegal. This business is supervised by a Statutory Authority; not merely does it not step in and break up this cartel — as the law requires — it sits on the committee running it. The business is commercial television in Britain.

PATRICK FORBES *reports*

THE IBA's statutory duty is to provide television 'as a public service for disseminating information, education and entertainment'. It is a service the public appreciates less and less. Channel 4's success has obscured the fact that ITV 1, the service provided by the 15 ITV companies, has suffered a sharp drop in ratings over the past three years (see box, p 19).

But the ITV companies remain some of the most profitable in Britain. Where the country's leading grocer, J. Sainsbury, can only achieve a meagre 6 per cent profit margin, the big ITV companies keep 35p as pure profit on every £1 they earn. Their profits are guaranteed by a market-sharing agreement, whose details were until now television's best kept secret — the 'Network Agreement'.

This agreement is probably illegal under UK law, and certainly illegal under EEC law. Legal opinions on the cartel were commissioned specially for this investigation from the country's leading restrictive practices lawyers, Professor Valentine Korah of University College London, and barrister Nicholas Green.

Korah argued that under EEC law the 15 ITV companies would be liable to fines of between 4 and 10 per cent of last year's turnover, that is £40-£100 million. Green poined out that the industry's supervisory body, the Independent Broadcasting Authority, had failed in its statutory duty under the 1981 Broadcasting Act 'to secure . . . *adequate competition* to supply programmes between a number of programme contractors independent of each other'.

Wealth accumulates, programmes decay

TVS is the ITV station that the viewer least likes, with ratings that are about 40 per cent lower than the average for the ITV network. As a consequence, Television South has made enormous profits, both for its own directors and its shareholders, since it was awarded the franchise for the South and South East in 1980. In the course of our investigation we discovered that it was the specific example of TVS, run by Chief Executive James Gatward, that has angered the Home Office and intensified ministerial pressure for reform of the ITV system. In its mid-term review, the IBA felt moved to say:

> . . . the company has some way to go before . . . fulfilling the high expectations which accompanied the award of its contract . . . (it) has undoubtedly enjoyed considerable success in expanding the business side of its operations and attaining high levels of profitability; but the same energy and purpose have not always been fully matched on the programme side . . .

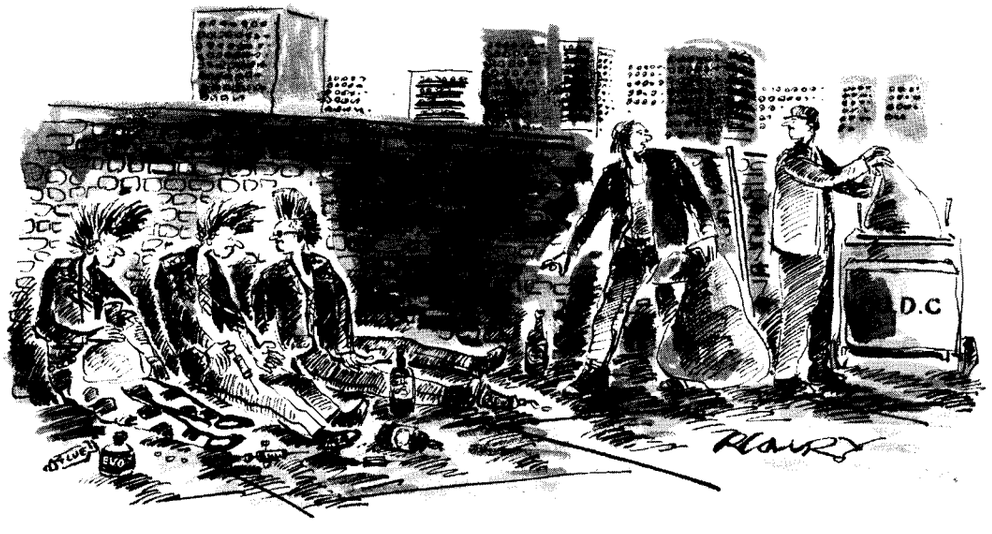
Gatward's initial investors aren't complaining. The TVS share price has risen from 25p in 1981 to its current 380p. Profits have exceded forecast in each year of operation, rising to £14 million on a turnover of £140 million last year. Gatward himself is now worth more than £2 million. And his business has around £30 million in the bank, after a successful rights issue earlier this year.

The IBA's chagrin at TVS commercial success is no doubt heartfelt. For all TVS has done is to expose the extraordinary economics of the ITV network. Unlike any other business, ITV companies make one thing (programmes), but sell another (advertising). So it is in James Gatward's financial interests to cut his costs (programme making) and expand his revenue (advertising). His advertising revenue has soared, as his audiences have dropped, because his advertisers have to spend more to reach their target audiences.

What was the effect of low ratings on a TV company's finances? 'In pure financial terms . . . fantastic,' says Jane Perry, head of systems research at ad agency Young & Rubicam. Because advertisers have a target TV audience for their ads and because TVS has a monopoly on TV advertising in its area, those advertisers have no option but to go to TVS, and spend more to reach their target audience. Because there's a finite amount of airtime available to advertisers, its price gets driven up. Gatward: 'What you say is *commercially* correct . . .' So, according to Perry, it is 50 per cent more expensive, on average, to advertise on TVS than elsewhere in ITV.

Ironically, TVS was awarded its franchise on the basis of its 'programme makers of particular promise'. That promise has not materialised. Having told the IBA it would spend more than the industry average on programmes (as a percentage of revenue), it has spent less. In consequence the programme makers that particularly impressed the IBA board have gone: Michael Blakstad, the Director of Programes, left after a row with Gatward; Anna Holme, Head of Children's Programmes, left for the BBC; and Herbert Chappell, the Director of Music, left after TVS lost the Glyndebourne contract — reputedly after Gatward told George Christie, its notoriously touchy proprietor, that he could make two episodes of *Minder* for the amount filming Glyndebourne was costing him.

Disingenuously, TVS describes itself as a prisoner of the ITV schedule; and ascribes its financial success to factors outside its control. It blames its poor ratings on the downmarket 'Northern' programmes that the big ITV



'It's a subconscious cry for a sympathetic TV documentary'

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An economics lesson: ITV companies make as few programmes (left: TVS's Bobby Davro) as possible and sell as much advertising (right: hard sell for Renault) as possible. Hence they become very rich

companies force it to show to its upmarket Southern audience. And it argues that it has no incentive to make its own programmes, because the ITV companies carve up the schedule between them, leaving regional ITV companies little or no airtime in which to show their own programmes. Up to a point, that's true. On the advertising front, it's complaining all the way to the bank; on the programme side it could make its own programmes, and not show *Crossroads*. It is just that under the hitherto secret 'Network Agreement' it has no incentive to do so.

Matters of common interest

In the IBA's pocket guide to 'Independent Television and Radio', the Independent Television Companies Association (ITCA) defines its role as acting 'on behalf of all the programme companies on certain matters of common interest'. Its role is more exciting than that — it supervises the operation of a price-fixing and market-sharing cartel by the ITV companies which is probably illegal under British Restrictive Practices law and certainly illegal under European competition law.

Under the 'Network Agreement' it is actually in the financial interests of the ten regional companies not to make programmes. Or as Michael Blakstad, ex Director of Programmes at TVS, disarmingly put it: 'When I started at TVS, we were warned by older and wiser heads who had done the job before that really the thing to do was not to make any programmes at all, just cash the cheques and get away with the minimum'.

This cartel has helped make ITV companies very profitable. Under it, the 'Network' companies are assured of a market for their programmes, the smaller companies of programmes for their market. Only the market has lost out. So last year advertising revenue on ITV increased by 22 per cent, shares in ITV companies more than doubled in value, and ITV's share of the television audience dropped by 2 per cent.

The agreement is a closely kept secret: the mechanics by which it operates are known only to a handful of programmers and accountants inside the confines of the Big Five. The group accountant at one of the Big Five companies described it as 'the thing we don't tell the regional companies about'. The Big Five's reluctance is shared by the industry's mandarins. When I confirmed that we wanted to question David McCall, the current President of ITCA, about the agreement, his Chairman, David Shaw, laughed uneasily and said: 'Oh, you mean the thing we can't talk about . . .' Happily, McCall proved Shaw wrong, and his interview confirmed that we had correctly identified the system's constituent parts.

The Network Agreement is organised into various programme pools. The first and most important of these is the Category A pool. It covers the output from the Major Five (Thames, Central, LWT, Granada, Yorkshire) that the whole network is committed to showing. Rather than haggle over the price of each individual programme, the large companies have developed a tariff system for supplying programmes to each other. Once they have swapped the programmes among themselves, they onsell the Category A programmes to the rest of the network *for money* under the separate Live Network Agreement (LNA) known colloquially as the 'Five to the Ten'.

Under the 'Five to the Ten' the regional companies commit themselves to showing around 40 hours a week of Big Five material for a payment of roughly £60 million. The cost is supposedly based on the regional companies' ability to pay, but, as David McCall, currently ITCA chairman and managing Director of Anglia, wryly admitted, though there were a 'number of things to be taken into account, the revenue for the system, labour deals and so on — at the end of the day it is a haggle'.

It is a haggle weighted against the regional companies. The tariff system operates without any reference to the regional companies committed to showing the programmes the system produces. Each year the ITCA Programme Controllers Committee (on which the regional companies are not represented and the IBA is) decides on the total tariff value of the programmes to be produced by the Big Five, and then matches

An Admiral Byng situation

COMMERCIAL television in Britain is a franchise business. The franchiser is the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA); the franchisees are the 15 independent television companies. Each company has a regional monopoly both in terms of the programmes it shows, and the advertising it attracts.

The five Network companies (Central, Granada, Thames, LWT and Yorkshire) dominate the system. The IBA commits them to producing programmes for the entire ITV network. The remaining ten 'regional' companies, i.e. TVS, Anglia, are under no such obligation. As a result the Big Five have won a guarantee from all ITV companies that a substantial proportion of their programme output will be shown over the ITV network; the regional companies have no such commitment.

Every so often the IBA reallocates the ITV deckchairs. Only a few lose their place. In the last franchise round in 1980, out of the 15, only three companies lost out — Westward to TSW, Southern Television to TVS, and ATV was forced to become Central. The next round is scheduled for 1991.

Each time the IBA attracts criticism for the arbitrary way in which it conducts the review. In interview, David Mellor, Home Office Minister said: 'There seems to be an Admiral Byng situation, where every time there is a reallocation someone is shot on the quarterdeck to encourage the others . . .' ●

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the individual companies' schedules (with each programme classified by type, and allotted the appropriate tariff) to the tariff value required of them. Each company's share of the network action is determined by its Net Advertising Revenue (NAR) for the previous year. Currently, Thames has the highest ad revenue, so it produces the package of programmes with the highest value; Yorkshire the lowest revenue, and in consequence the cheapest package. Whatever the value of the package each company has a guarantee that these programmes will be shown, and they should recover both the direct and the indirect cost of making them — partly through their own advertising revenue and partly through the money they get from the regional companies.

Technically, the ITCA Programme Controllers Committee answers to another Committee of the ITCA on which all 15 ITV companies are represented. McCall averred that the regional companies had a 'majority in numbers . . . [but] the system as presently constituted gives the power and responsibility to the five network companies and the programme controllers of these companies are the ones that really create . . . the schedule.'

The regional companies have little incentive to buck the system and make their own programmes. They have no guarantee that those programmes will be shown by the rest of the network. And if they do get shown, they will only recoup their direct costs and a portion of their indirect costs. So TVS, for example, can only recoup £145,000 for the dire *CATS Eyes* (ironically, a programme made specifically to get TVS onto the network); were it a network company it could expect £279,000 — nearly double that amount. Regional companies could, of course, take only a small amount of network product, and show their own programmes to their local audience. But that's an expensive course of action, and one unlikely to please shareholders grown accustomed to handsome dividends.

The magic circle

It is an extraordinary agreement. David Mellor best characterised the otherworldly nature of the ITV system: 'It's archaic . . . and highly questionable whether a magic circle a bit like the Security Council of the UN, based on what sort of power you were in 1954, works in the public interest.' However, some of the regional companies are at last pressing for change.

Gus MacDonald, Director of Programmes at STV: 'I have 10 per cent of the Network audience, but only 3 per cent of the network action — it's a situation that would have been declared illegal under the Act of Union, had there been television in 1707.' MacDonald's argument is forceful; when his audience gets a chance to see some Scottish programmes, *Tutti Frutti* or STV's *Taggart*, they embrace them. *Taggart*, for example, scored higher ratings in Central Scotland than the hitherto invincible *EastEnders*.

Faced with political and industry pressure, the IBA has caved in. They have recently allowed 'discussion' of the Network Agreement to be placed on the agenda. David Glencross, Director of Television at the IBA, said frankly in interview that he thought the network was 'locked into systems or mechanisms devised 20 years ago'. He was, however, cautious about abandoning the idea of networking altogether.

Cartels are illegal; so says the 1976 Restrictive Practices Act. Currently, the ITV companies escape the sweep of this legislation. But they shouldn't, according to legal opinion obtained from the country's leading restrictive practices expert, Professor Valentine Korah of University College London.

Aware of the restrictive nature of their practice, the ITV companies tried to register the agreement in 1976. Seven years later, the Office of Fair Trading finally decided that the programmes produced by the ITV companies were not goods or services, they were *licences* and thus did not fall inside the legislation's ambit. The basis for this extraordinary decision was a court case in 1976 involving shop leases: Ravenseft. Korah demonstrates that Ravenseft established no valid precedent; and there seems no logical reason why a monopoly involving exploitation of copyright should be treated any differently from any other cartel. Korah: 'This is a carve up — it involves all the major suppliers . . .'

Could the ITV companies enjoy statutory protection? The IBA is after all a body established by law. Barrister Nicholas Green points out that legal precedent shows that the IBA's statutory position affords the ITV companies no protection; and anyway the IBA is actually in breach of its statutory duty under the 1981 Broadcasting Act in failing to break up the cartel.

European competition law involves none of the mental contortions required by English law; and accordingly the ITV companies are liable for heavy fines. Copyright is not exempt from Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome. If the ITV companies have not registered their agreement with Brussels — and a carefully placed parliamentary question by Archie Kirkwood MP indicates they have not — they could be liable for fines of between 4 and 10 per cent of last year's turnover; in this case between £40 and £100 million. Last year the EEC fined ICI millions of pounds for running a cartel; a different set of initials won't mean anything to them.

ITV share figures

(percentage share of total television audience)

	ITV 1 & 2	ITV 1
1983		
(year in quarters, and year average)		
1	51.9	48.1
2	48.9	44.7
3	54.0	49.2
4	54.0	49.3
AV	**52.2**	**47.8**
1984		
1	53.8	48.7
2	52.4	46.5
3	53.2	47.7
4	55.7	48.9
AV	**53.8**	**48.0**
1985		
1	55.7	47.9
2	53.4	46.8
3	53.5	46.2
4	52.6	45.4
AV	**53.8**	**46.6**
1986		
1	53.6	45.1
2	51.8	44.1
3	52.7	45.5
4	52.1	44.3
AV	**52.6**	**44.75**
1987		
1	51.5	43.3

Source BARB/Channel 4

Playing billiards in the dark

So TV franchises remain a licence to print money, albeit the oddest kind of licence. You would think, therefore, that the IBA would take pains to hand out these licences in the most orderly and open of ways. On the contrary, the franchises to these million-pound businesses are handed out on the most arbitrary of bases, and in secret.

Charged with responsibility for the communications business, the IBA refuses to make known the basis on which the franchises — each worth millions of pounds — are awarded either to the public, or bizarrely to the unsuccessful applicants. Lady Plowden, Chairman (sic) of the Authority in 1980, told me 'she didn't think it was in anyone's best interest to talk about it . . .' Jonathan Aitken, applicant in 1980 for two franchises, Yorkshire (unsuccessful) and Breakfast Time (successful), said: 'We found that negotiating with the Authority over a franchise was rather like playing billiards in the dark — you would answer their questions, but get no reaction back. And then when they switched the lights on, you'd find that the table had been taken away.'

Nothing could be more arbitrary than the IBA's behaviour over TV-AM. Originally it had no intention of awarding a breakfast-time franchise, but then allowed itself to be pressured by the fated Famous Five, led by Peter Jay. Having awarded the franchise, it did little to ensure its success, in particular failing to correct Jay's peculiar belief that TV-AM wouldn't be harmed by the BBC starting its breakfast service two weeks earlier. There were also fundamental problems about content, as Jonathan Aitken memorably put it to the *NS*: 'Rather than the *Daily Mail* of the airwaves as we had aimed to be, we turned out to be the *FT*, or the *Guardian*, printed upside down, and written in Chinese.'

The IBA's neglect of TV-AM stemmed from the obsession of Sir Brian Young, then Director of Television, with getting Channel 4 on the air. As one former board member put it: 'There was this indecision about going ahead with TV-AM, but going ahead immediately with Channel 4. Brian took this almost metaphysical attitude toward Channel 4. He argued we should leave TV-AM to its own devices.'

Leaving the television system to its own devices has proved a disaster. The Conservative manifesto promises 'stronger and more effective arrangements' to control sex and violence on television: it has made no moves, and can be expected to make none in the future, to cajole independent television companies into making more and better programmes. It has quietly presided over a system in which the rich have got much, much richer: consistent, at least. □

*This article is the result of a joint Channel 4/*New Statesman *investigation. Patrick Forbes worked with Fulcrum Productions on 'The Magic Circle', shown on Channel 4's* The Media Show *on Wednesday 27 May.*

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Conservative International: US funds British groups

Right-wing groups in Britain owe their existence to the US-based Heritage Foundation, the centre of a worldwide movement of the right. The extent of this connection is revealed here for the first time, in an Inter-Nation report*

THE HERITAGE Foundation, the most influential and furthest right think-tank in the United States, has channeled $1m over the past five years to right-wing organisations in Britain and, in a smaller way, to other West European countries. The money has been paid with the direct aim of influencing domestic politics in the UK.

Heritage, mainly financed by Joseph Coors, a US beer baron and right-wing ideologue, is now bidding to be the core of a 'Conservative International'. Already closer than any other similar centre to President Reagan, Heritage now has the contacts and the funds to further its programmes, which it defines as designed 'to make the voices of responsible conservatism heard in Washington, DC . . . and in the capitals of the world'.

This ideological export offensive is not, as far as can be determined, covert or unlawful (though the US Internal Revenue Service may not be fully informed on some of Heritage's activities). But it is increasing in scope and volume: and though the US right is now suffering severe setbacks as active and direct responsibility for the Iran-contra scandal creeps nearer the President, and as corruption taints its natural supporters from the bible belt to Wall Street, there is every sign that it will continue to grow.

So far, this Heritage effort has concentrated on Great Britain. According to schedules of grants filed with the IRS, more than 95 per cent of the funds sent abroad by Heritage in 1982, 1983 and 1985 ended up in the hands of three London-based groups: the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, the Coalition for Peace through Security and the International Freedom Fund Establishment. (The IRS says the 1984 schedule is unavailable, while returns for 1986 had not been processed.)

Exporting the right

Heritage's work in Britain is the most striking example to date of the way in which the US right-wing has begun to export its ideology abroad. In the case of IEDSS, for which Heritage provided start-up capital and the overwhelming bulk of continuing financial support, the result is a virtual Heritage satellite in Great Britain.

Heritage's international activities have been helped by its easy entree to Reagan Administration circles. In 1982 President Reagan appoined Heritage Foundation President Edwin J. Feulner Jr chairman of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, which evaluates programmes of the US Information Agency including the Voice of America, Radio Marti, Fulbright scholarships and the National Endowment for Democracy.

> ***'Non-governmental think-tanks have transformed the political landscape of the United States; now, thanks to Heritage, they may also be altering the face of Britain'***

Nowhere have the ties been closer than with Great Britain. Feulner, who attended the London School of Economics and the University of Edinburgh, maintains close personal links to British conservatives. Gerald Frost, executive director of the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies (IEDSS), the foremost recipient of Heritage largesse, told Inter-Nation in an interview that 'I'm helped in some ways that Ed Feulner is an anglophile and an admirer of English institutions.' Feulner's enthusiasm is reciprocated: in October 1983 Thatcher sent Heritage an effusive personal message of congratulations on the foundation's tenth anniversary. It can even claim to have had a hand in the Conservative manifesto. John O'Sullivan, seconded to Mrs Thatcher from *The Times* (where he is associate editor), wrote key sections of 'The Next Moves Forward'. From 1980-1983, O'Sullivan was editor of Heritage's *Policy Review*.

The desire to turn anglophilia into hard cash was evident as early as 1979. But Heritage-funded projects in Europe became more systematic in 1982, when US and British conservatives grew alarmed at the growing influence of the peace movement. In May that year Heritage disseminated a 'backgrounder' on 'Moscow and the Peace Offensive', in which it called on NATO and 'its affiliated public support organisations' to spread 'information concerning the links . . . between known Communist front groups and the "independent" peace groups'.

The campaign to prevent the deployment of cruise missiles on British soil was accompanied by a steady acceleration of Heritage funding. According to the IRS schedules, its donations to a range of British institutions rose from $106,000 in 1982 to $254,000 in 1985. Although 1986 figures are not yet available, total Heritage contributions over a five-year period appear to be in the neighbourhood of $1 million, since there is no evidence of any sudden cut-off among the recipients in London.

Three main recipients were identified in the IRS schedules for 1982, 1983 and 1985: IEDSS, which received a total of $427,809 — more than any other group, US or foreign; the International Freedom Fund Establishment ($140,000); and the Coalition for Peace through Security (CPS). According to the IRS records, Heritage made a $10,000 grant to CPS in 1982. But additional evidence suggests that Heritage funding may also include a further, undeclared component. Inter-Nation has obtained a letter from the CPS thanking Heritage for a further $50,000 grant in October 1982.

Three other British groups receiving token amounts were the Social Affairs Unit, the International Symposium of the Open Society and an organisation listed simply as Aneks.

Think-tank international

'This is the age of the think-tank,' said IEDSS Executive Director Frost in an interview with Inter-Nation. Non-governmental think-tanks have already transformed the political landscape of the United States; now, thanks to Heritage, they may also be altering the face of Britain. Frost was secretary of the country's most influential think-tank of the 1970s, the Centre for Policy Studies. Margaret Thatcher was among its founders in 1974 and served as its first president.

IEDSS is a registered charity under British law, and as such is barred from political lobbying. It was founded in 1979, the year that Margaret Thatcher came to power, and stated that its goals were: 'To assess the impact of political change in Europe and North America on defence and strategic issues. In particular, to study the domestic political situation in NATO countries and how this affects the NATO posture'.

In a February 1987 interview with Inter-Nation, Jeffrey Gayner, Heritage's counsellor for international relations, denied any formal connection between Heritage and the Institute. But IEDSS was in fact set up with Foundation funds. The connection runs deeper than money alone: Heritage President Feulner is chairman of the Institute's board. Richard V. Allen, Reagan's first National Security Adviser, a Heritage Distinguished Fellow and head of the foundation's Asian Studies Centre Advisory Council, is also a board member. Frank Shakespeare, the Reagan Administration's

This story was reported by Arthur Gavshon and Mark Schapiro in London and David Corn in Washington, and written by George Black in New York. Inter-Nation is a network of reporters and papers, initiated by the New York Nation *and including the* New Statesman, *recently formed to develop international reports.*

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Ambassador to the Vatican, was a founding member of IEDSS's advisory council and is chairman of the Heritage Board of Trustees.

The idea to create IEDSS, says Frost, came from Stephen Haseler. One of the earliest prominent defectors from the British Labour Party to the new Social Democratic Party, Haseler was also a Heritage Scholar and a member of the editorial board of the Foundation's flagship journal, *Policy Review*. According to Frost, Haseler 'saw the need for a broad-based international institute', and 'persuaded Ed Feulner that this was a good idea'. Feulner agreed to support the good idea to the tune of £60,000, says Frost.

The second critical player in setting IEDSS priorities was Sir Peter Blaker, a senior Tory who, says Frost, 'saw the implications of an upsurge in peace movement activity, which was a movement of concern to him'. Blaker is an important figure in British defence circles. From 1979-1983 he was a junior minister in the Ministry of Defence, and in 1983 headed a secret Ministerial Group on Nuclear Weapons and Public Opinion, which generated films and literature against Britain's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He is currently chairman of the Conservatives' parliamentary Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Committee.

A second senior Tory involved with IEDSS is Ray Whitney MP, who served on the Institute's board from 1979-1984. Whitney is also a junior minister in the Thatcher government and preceded Blaker as chair of the Tories' Foreign Affairs Committee in parliament. In the late 1970s Whitney headed a secret Foreign Office body called the Information Research Department, which conducted covert propaganda activities, including some directed against British leftists. He appears to have taken a more direct role than Blaker in the smear campaign against the peace movement. In April 1983, as campaigning began for a general election, Defence Minister Michael Heseltine released a letter purporting to prove communist domination of CND and the Labour Party. One of Heseltine's major sources was Whitney. 'Our colleague Ray Whitney', he commented at the time, 'has added a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the political motivations of CND.'

IEDSS publications also regularly attacked CND. Its first monograph, *Protest and Perish*, an assault on E. P. Thompson's *Protest and Survive*, accused Thompson of 'furthering the arms race' by destabilising NATO and the bloc system. *Great Britain and NATO: A Parting of the Ways?*, also published in 1982, declared that Britain could face civil war if a Labour government took office, and warned that NATO could not entrust secrets to a governing party under the sway of a 'pro-Soviet faction'. Further publications assailed the presence of the churches in the peace movement and the teaching of peace studies in British universities. Co-author of the last of these was Caroline Cox, a former director of the Centre for Policy Studies and a leading Conservative Party spokesperson in the House of Lords after Thatcher made her a Baroness in 1983.

Most of this propaganda activity was made possible by grants from the Heritage Foundation, and though both Gayner and Frost played down the connection in interviews, there is little likelihood that IEDSS, whose 1986 budget, according to Frost, was £125,000, could survive without Heritage backing. According to its year-end financial report for 1985, the Institute's total income from donations in 1984 and 1985 amounted to £161,318. Figures lodged with the IRS in Washington show that Heritage gave IEDSS $91,165 in 1982; $185,371 in 1983; and $151,273 in 1985.

At least one other US private foundation specialising in ultra-conservative causes has also funded IEDSS. A representative of the John M. Olin Foundation, where Heritage trustee William E. Simon is in charge of grants, confirmed that it had given IEDSS $20,000 in 1986. Frost declined to reveal how much IEDSS had received from Heritage last year, but eventually admitted that 'Okay, in 1986 they were still our biggest source of funds.' He is visibly rattled by the topic of Heritage funds: 'If you're seen as having this connection', he told Inter-Nation, 'people might take less notice of you . . . And the media becomes suspicious.'

British fair play

The Coalition for Peace through Security was also created out of whole cloth by Heritage dollars, with the declared intention of making 'one-sided disarmament a millstone around the neck of any politician advocating such a course of action for Britain'. The Heritage-CPS relationship was cemented in the autumn of 1981, when the group's three founders visited Washington and agreed to embark on the task of 'educating public opinion' in Britain. For its founding conference in London in March 1982, CPS brought over assorted New Right luminaries including Paul Weyrich, co-founder of Heritage and president of the Free Congress Foundation, and Morton Blackwell, then a White House aide and assistant to direct mail wizard Richard Viguerie, to discuss how US conservative fund-raising and opinion-forming techniques could be used in Britain. Thatcher sent a message of welcome, telling CPS 'I wish every success to your efforts as I consider this a matter vital to our security and the preservation of peace.'

Links between CPS and IEDSS are close. Sir Peter Blaker is involved with both groups, and the two co-operated in the publication and distribution of *Protest and Perish*. Their methods differ, however. Though its literature claims CPS is committed to 'the spirit of our British tradition of fair play', the group 'plays dirty' in its effort to smear nuclear disarmers as Soviet puppets, according to CND vice-chair Bruce Kent. Among its tactics, Kent claims, are to heckle and disrupt CND meetings, often flying a blimp or banner from a plane reading 'CND = KGB'. In one characteristic action last August, CPS activists disrupted a two-minute silence at a rally commemorating Hiroshima by playing the national anthem full-blast over loudspeakers.

Third, and most enigmatic of the groups funded by Heritage is something called the International Freedom Fund Establishment, which is not registered in Great Britain either as a company or a charity. IRS schedules show that Heritage has sent at least £140,000 earmarked for this group to Brian Crozier, a familiar fixture on the far right of British politics, who was identified as a CIA contract employee by the *New York Times* in December 1977. Crozier is the former head of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, which was heavily funded by the ultra-conservative US funder Richard Mellon Scaife in the 1970s. In 1981 a Scaife aide reported that the institute had set up 'solid working relationships with the Heritage Foundation', and that its 'research into political and psychological warfare, revolutionary activities, insurgency operations and terrorism is consistently used by the Thatcher government'. More recently, Crozier has taken up the cause of the Nicaraguan contras. Last December he shared a platform in London with contra leader Arturo Cruz and former US Ambassador to the United Nations Charles M. Lichenstein, who is also a Heritage Fellow.

There is no evidence, however, of who received the Heritage money sent to Crozier. In a 28 April telephone interview with Inter-Nation, Crozier insisted that his only connection with Heritage was as an Adjunct Scholar. He described himself as a freelance risk analyst, and described the International Freedom Fund Establishment as 'a contact or checking point' that handles funds for a number of organisations, which he declined to name. In a second conversation two days later Crozier said 'The IFFE is a clearing-house and that is all.' He then acknowledged arranging for the onward transfer of Heritage funds, but again refused to respond to questions about the eventual beneficiaries. 'This is a private matter,' he said.

Heritage Vice-President Herb Berkowitz, when asked to comment, described IFFE as a 'networking operation . . . We support them and he (Crozier) does the work.' He also acknowledged that Heritage had sent Crozier a further $50,000 in 1986. The money, Berkowitz said, 'goes to scholars, writers and research institutes. Some might be affiliated with political parties . . . he makes the decision.' When asked if Crozier told Heritage who they were, Berkowitz replied, 'I do not think he reports back to us in detail.'

He should. Tax-exempt organisations such as Heritage, says an IRS official, 'have to keep control over their funds and know where the funds are being ultimately spent'. Even if transfer to a third party is pre-arranged, 'the grantor has to keep control and records . . . They have to know where the money goes.' In the case of IFFE, Heritage appears not to know.

Guilt-free West

Britain is only the most dramatic instance of a growing international effort by Heritage. Smaller amounts of money are already being used to fund other European groups and individuals, such as economist Friedrich von Hayek of the University of Freiburg in West Germany and conservative economic research institutes in Paris and Rome. Heritage works closely with such conservative groups as the Hans Seidel Foundation in Germany, international arm of Franz-Josef Strauss's Christian Social Union, and the Club de l'Horloge in France, with which it co-sponsored a May 1986 conference in Nice on 'La Deculpabilisation de l'Occident' — getting rid of the West's guilt.

In an interview with Inter-Nation, Heritage Foundation Vice-President Burton Yale Pines predicted: 'Maybe the next step will be to organise some kind of Conservative International.' He suggested this could take the form of an alliance of as many as 20 like-minded groups in the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and other countries. During the last six years, the Heritage Foundation has been a major force behind the 'Reagan Revolution'. The Reagan Administration itself will come to an end by 1988. Heritage will do its best, however, to ensure that the principles of Reaganism continue to shape policies far beyond the borders of the United States. □

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Books

EVOLUTION

Community of microbes

Brian Goodwin

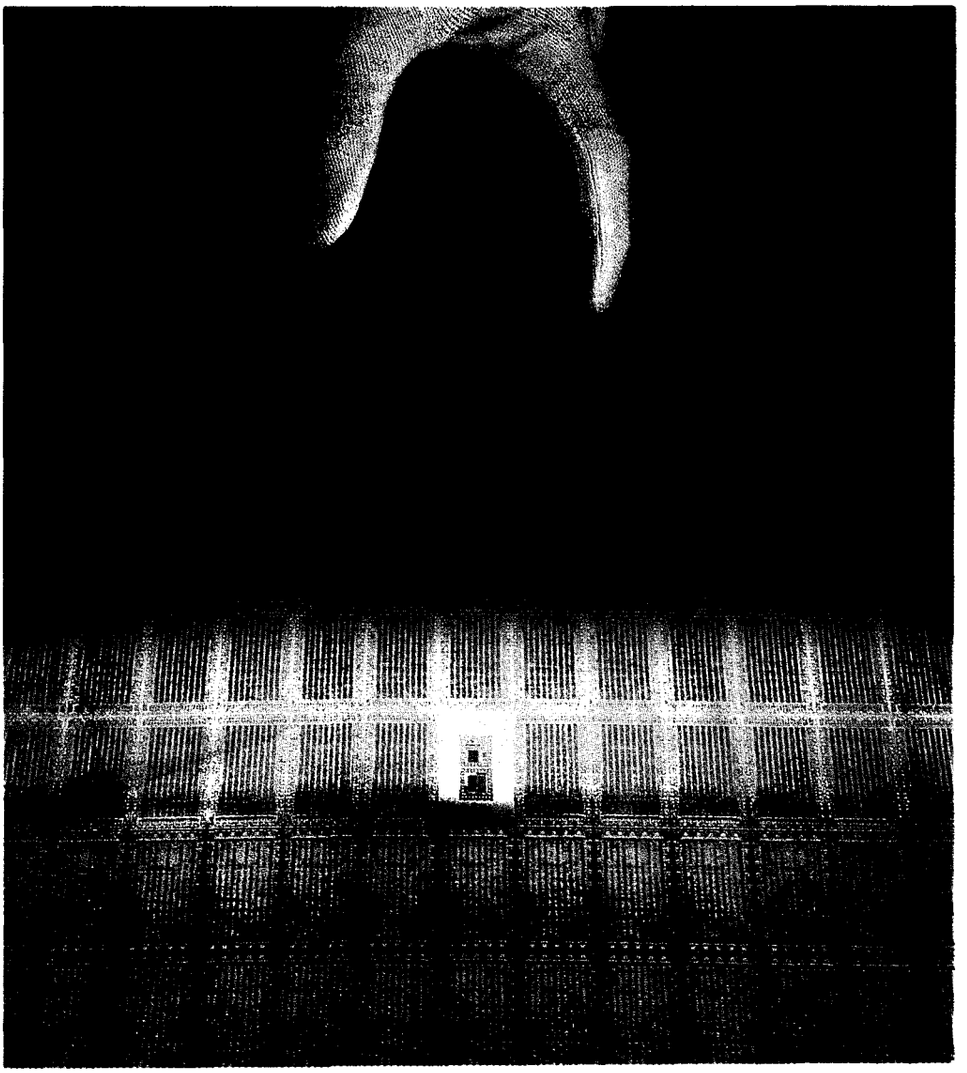
Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution.
LYNN MARGULIS and DORION SAGAN *Unwin*
£12.95

'IF THE EIFFEL TOWER were now representing the world's age, the skin of paint on the pinnacle-knob at its summit would represent man's share of that age; and anybody would perceive that the skin was what the tower was built for. I reckon they would, I dunno.' So mused a sceptical Mark Twain on the view that what evolution is all about is the glorious ascent of man from unlikely beginnings, such as little microbes.

The quotation is used in *Microcosmos*, whose authors are equally sceptical about this view of evolution, but, this time, have something to put in its place. They argue that the evolutionary tower is made up primarily of the creatures that started it all off, the microbes themselves (strictly speaking the prokaryotes, micro-organisms like bacteria that lack a nucleus). Margulis and Sagan believe that these fecund and inventive bugs have generated a whole hierarchy of organisms and super-organisms out of patterns of mutual dependence (symbiosis). Far from being the primitive, lowly creatures that they are generally taken to be, microbes hold the key to the biosphere. And it is all achieved through an orgy of sex that makes rabbits look like celibates.

However, microbes do it differently from rabbits — horizontally rather than vertically. Before your imagination gets to work on this, let me explain that direction here refers to generations: bacteria can exchange genes by mechanisms which are independent of growth and division, so that 'sex' (gene exchange) is uncoupled from reproduction. Thus they can pool all their diverse genetic resources and so evolve very rapidly. This is how antibiotic resistance, for example, has spreadly so quickly among infectious bacteria. We have only recently discovered these mechanisms and how to put them to work in biotechnology.

If a species is defined as the members of a population that exchange genes, then all bacteria can be regarded as constituting a single species. Some biologists have gone so far as to suggest that bacteria collectively constitute a gigantic 'super-organism', different types acting like the different cells of a complex organism, specialising in different functions that act to the benefit of the whole. It is from this type of microbial teamwork that the authors derive their vision of a global regulatory role for the microcosmos: the inter-locking activities of hordes of different bacteria on the surface of the planet result in a dynamic organic stability that is the ecological basis of life on earth: they purify the waters, fertilise the soil, maintain the atmosphere and, generally, keep the elements of the biosphere cycling.



The art of science: close-up of a wafer of 150 uncut silicon chips from the splendidly illustrated *The Particle Explosion* (Oxford, £15) by Frank Close, Michael Marten and Christine Sutton

But what of all the other types of organism whose cells have real nuclei (eukaryotes) — that is, all the plants, fungi and animals, including ourselves, that we think of as the main results of evolution? Are they just passengers on the microcosmic ship of ecological balance? Here is the most interesting message of the book: these 'higher' organisms are essentially syndicates of prokaryotic micro-organisms, working together in close harmony and making possible the immense versatility and variety of form and function that is the hall-mark of the biological realm. The distinctive features of eukaryotic cells are the presence of a nucleus and many little energy-generating organelles called mitochondria. Plant cells have in addition chloroplasts, organelles concerned with photosynthesis. Lynn Margulis' most important biological achievement (in co-operation with others) has been to convince most biologists that mitochondria and chloroplasts originated as bacteria that learned how to live co-operatively inside another bacterial cell whose original intention was to have them for lunch. The elaboration of this idea to explain also the origins of the remarkable processes of chromosome separation (mitosis) before cells divide, the origins of eukaryotic sex (gene exchange linked to reproduction) and the evolution of multicellularity, show the potential of this co-operative view of evolutionary innovation. This is creative, provocative thinking at its best.

I wish I could say the same for the rest of the book, but well-grounded inspiration fails about half-way through. The authors push basic insights about mutualism and symbiosis well beyond plausibility into a remarkable conceptual confusion. For example, they claim that because cells in the eye have little fibrous protein elements called microtubules with a similar spatial pattern to those found in bacteria called spirochaetes, and brain cells contain a lot of these microtubules, therefore 'the true language of the nervous system

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(could) be spirochetal remnants'. This is the worst kind of material reductionism.

What science is actually concerned with is understanding organisational principles, the exact relational properties between the components of any particular system that give it its distinctive properties. Brains have a specific type of dynamic order even if some of their components have a historical lineage continuous with spirochaetes; cells, the biosphere and machines also have their distinctive types of order. To lump these together and say that they are all alive and, ultimately, 'based on a variety of processes, including that of DNA replication' does not aid clarity. Which is a pity, for the book, despite its excess of superlatives, has an important message: that new types of order and dynamic stability arise in evolution more often from co-operative than competitive interaction; and that community is where the future lies, whether it includes us or not. □

SOCIOLOGY

Many hands

Hilary Rose

Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society
BRUNO LATOUR *Open University* £9.95

EVERYONE KNOWS that DNA is a molecule shaped like a double helix that transmits genetic information between generations. But, as anyone who saw the recent TV docudrama also knows, back in the early 1950s when Rosalind Franklin and Maurice Wilkins were studying X-ray photographs and Francis Crick and James Watson were leaning over their shoulders, no one knew anything of the sort. DNA was by no means certain to be *the* genetic material, and it could have had many different shapes. Indeed, for a while, they all thought it had.

How do scientific conjectures and observations turn into seemingly universal facts? For traditional philosophy and history of science, with its Whiggish view of progress, this is no problem — merely the inevitable, onward march of the truth. But sociologists of knowledge, starting in the 19th century, began to question this simple view. The reasons why particular experiments are done, interpretations made and conclusions accepted seemed no longer to depend merely on the simple reality of the world scientists study. Instead, science began to be seen as a social process, its knowledge, in uneasy relation to the material world, reflective of the ideologies and interests of those who prosecuted it. For a time, all knowledge seemed to dissolve into social relations, a miasma of hyper-reflexivity.

As the 1970s wore on, the high tide of hyper-reflexivity receded somewhat; perhaps science could say something about the world after all, but that knowledge was the product of the labour process of the laboratory. Bruno Latour, a French anthropologist, wrote his first book on science, *Laboratory Life*, after fieldwork in a California hormone laboratory, whose scientist inmates and their strange practices he studied with the same eye his training had encouraged him to turn on other exotic tribes. In *Science in Action* he takes on a wider challenge – that of attempting to synthesise the cognative, internalist with the social, externalist accounts of how science grows in a single, coherent picture: that of the process of transformation by which many actors — laboratory workers, fund givers, entrepreneurs, publicists and politicians — cause smudgy, circular patterns of dots to turn into seemingly certain knowledge of the genetic code, or half-grasped ideas of the conditions under which fuel oil explodes into working diesel engines.

For Latour, this transition, between tentative interpretations of data and unchallenged black boxes to be used as the basis for other activities — new series in molecular biology or multi-million dollar industries — is a subtle business. All along the route an idea may falter, may not meet the challenges that confront it, or better hypothese may compete with it, alternative patents be taken out, research funds fail to materialise.

The scale of this process means, paradoxically, that for Latour science is simultaneously the work of the individual researcher and a vast social project which requires the mobilisation of whole sectors of society. It is no good the isolated post-Doc working late in the lab complaining that the Professor is always away at conferences or committees and never actually 'at the bench'. Without the activity of the Professor first raising the money and then publicising the results, the work of the post-Doc couldn't exist or would disappear without trace. But, without the post-Doc . . . Science and technology, indivisible, are nonetheless Janus-faced, one face turned outward offering reassuring certainty that science conforms with nature, the other inward, offering doubt and scepticism, insisting on the social nature of the knowledge science produces. Latour's argument, packed with real life examples, relishing paradox, and giving added pleasure with its amusing Franglais prose, seems to challenge the convictions of both science and those who study it.

Yet his argument itself has a Janus-like character, beginning seemingly radical and destabilising of science, it concludes consensually, re-establishing both science and its social dimensions in an entirely functionalist manner. Where others see contradictions in science — between its rhetoric of openness and its practice of competitive secrecy, between its pacific claims and its violent practices, between its managers and its workers — Latour sees nothing but necessary divisions of labour. By cutting himself adrift from those who point to the dominant interests which science serves and to the masculine composition of its workforce and its knowledge, he sidesteps the crucial challenge.

Latour's synthesis may neatly depoliticise the challenge to science offered by the sociologists of knowledge, but it fails to come to grips with the more severe challenge presently offered by feminism — not least in the debates around standpoint theory in epistemelogy. Standpoint theorists such as Flax, Harding and Hartsock in the USA and myself in the UK suggest that the gender division of labour is profoundly linked to the masculinist domination of nature. There is more than a little irony for a researcher preoccupied by the division of labour, and its relationship to knowledge, to operate within networks so exclusively constructed by gender. Rosalind Franklin's sisters and daughters are still to be excluded. Latour's closing claim that his 'book has been written to provide a breathing space for those who want to study independently the extension of all these networks' suggests that, unless feminism engages in a rather sharp struggle for social and conceptual space, both networks and analysis are likely to remain integral to masculinist hegemony. 'Breathing space', it seems, is not for women. □

SCIENCE FICTION

Sick to death

Josephine Saxton

SCIENCE FICTION has always been reputed to be largely rubbish, often dangerously unpleasant, and to dwell upon horror. I have argued that this is not always so, defended the genre as the origin of wonderful imaginative fiction, vivid ideas, even useful information — such as, if we do not live differently, the end of the world is nigh. The problem was, most people did not read sf, so the books' messages never reached far enough; now, millions read sf, but the messages seem to have degenerated.

To be fair, it is not only sf which lately indulges even more in ichor, dribbling blood, melting flesh,

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hideous . . . But what am I doing? Oh dear, how easy it is to get into sheer nastiness. Especially in science fiction, because science itself threatens us with so many probably horrible endings. Perhaps reading or watching vicious, horrible, slimy, vile events, told in lovingly detailed images, will actually make us sit up and take notice, change our ways. Or it will make us even worse than we are. Or it will make nothing but pots of money. Apparently a kind of fiction based on war, killing, fascism, pain, disease *et al* sells extremely well — and this in a world where such commodities exist in real life. It really seems that a lot of people enjoy what makes me nauseous. But then, I'm rather wet — I'm the one who thought Joseph Heller was indulging something evil in *Catch 22* and could not understand how anyone could laugh at such things. I've grown up since then, of course; I'm told I've even written some pretty vile things myself; but never, I hope, for their own sake, or to titillate some gross impulse.

I tried a random sampling of several new books and, in each case, the pages were soaked, if not always in blood, in slimy fluids from alien beings — and this at a time when we are supposed to be trying to understand other cultures, when everyone knows that killing animals for fun is wicked, even if they do stalk your camp at night, growling hungrily.

'Blood drained down its legs and skin hung from its ribs in a fold, exposing the bone. It looked at her and staggered, almost collapsing into her arms . . .' This is from **The Legacy of Heorot** by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, with Steven Barnes (Gollancz, £10.95). It has mythically named hero figures Cadman and Weyland, a lot of killing and I don't know what else because I honestly could not read any more. Basically, I think the plot and most of the action is lifted from Beowulf. Who enjoys writing this stuff? Charles Platt has put together a revised and updated collection of **Dream Makers**, interviews with science fiction writers (Xanadu, £9.95). The essays are extremely well written and Platt has the skill to let his subjects reveal themselves. Having met many of them (mostly the nicer ones) I can say that these writers are more mentally active, more informed and more energetic than most of their works would indicate.

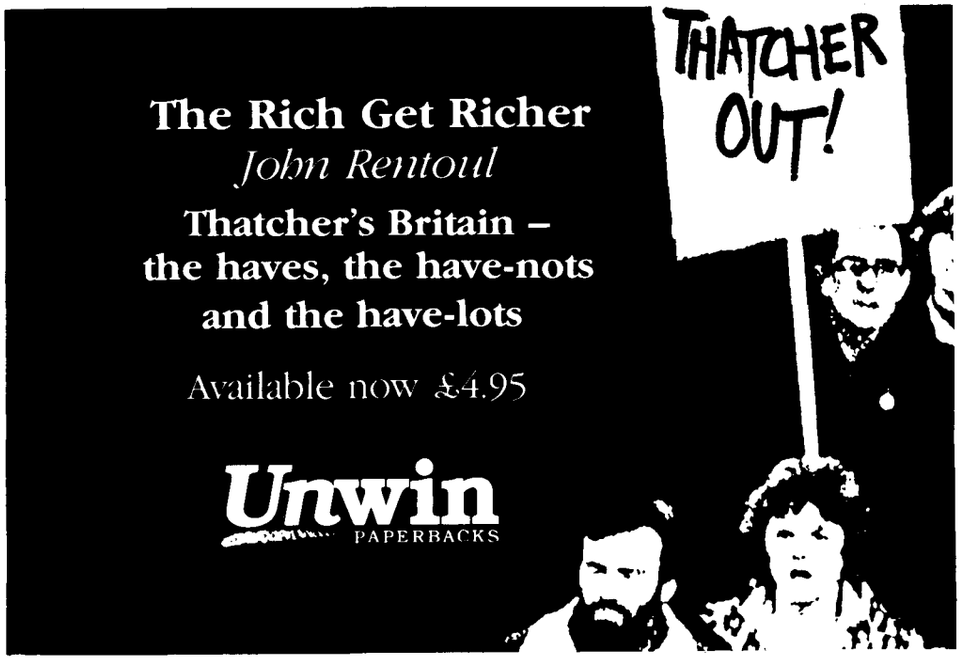
The most notable in this respect, whose work is also of extraordinarily high calibre, is Alice Sheldon, who often writes under the name of James Tiptree Jr. As a child she walked across Darkest Africa on a 2,700 mile safari with her parents, was introduced to the poverty of Calcutta at the age of nine, later sold graphic art to the *New Yorker*, worked for the CIA, was an experimental psychologist — and much more. There was enough material in this one interview to make me long for a whole biography; or, better, an autobiography. She is the sole woman in the book because Platt believes that most female sf writers actually write fantasy, which he does not want to include (although then, of course, he interviews writers more of the fantasy or 'soft science' type than not). But, he says, it was not intended to be definitive and he chose authors who were either well known to him, accessible, or willing to talk to him.

So, we make do with 24 male writers, including the delightfully dotty and shiningly intelligent Theodore Sturgeon, sadly now deceased, playing at Professor Crackpot with a wry charm, and Stephen King whom Platt regards, very weirdly, as 'our preeminent modern myth-maker'. And then, Jerry Pournelle, who turns out to be quite as frightening (to me, not Mr Platt, who comes away half converted to extreme right-wing views) as the stuff he turns out to such high demand. It is very alarming to read a writer quoted as saying that he finds the military life 'damned attractive' and that all his books are blockbusters.

Such (in film of late) was the sickening *The Fly* and, the logical extrapolation of unthinkingly crushing beetles, the brilliant but horrible *Aliens* (meet the Marines). Is any of this stuff having any effect upon us? Is it numbing us or is it waking us up? This is an important question because so many writers still seem to believe that clearly to state a case will change the world.

Such a one is Martin Amis in his **Einstein's Monsters** (Cape, £5.95) and, unlike any *other* book of lurid science fiction stories of late, it was given maximum publicity in the *Observer* and elsewhere. In his Introduction Amis states, with regard to nuclear armament (the loose theme of his stories) that 'in this debate, this crap game, he does want to get his chip on the table'. It is a very unpleasant chip, of necessity, the subject a gift to one who has a gift for seeking vileness.

Amis lists his influences, including Kafka, Borges, Schell, Rushdie; I think he should have included a few of those writers in his father's *New Maps of Hell*, science fiction-cum-horror writers with few literary pretensions. I wish I believed his earnestly detailed stories would deter nuclear armament; I rather fear it will attract his usual readers and deter those with weak stomachs. Which has obviously been the case so far. The more we read and see of nightmares, the more we can live with them; and, with them, we may die. □



BRAIN

Re-wiring

Steven Rose

Neuronal Man: The Biology of Mind
JEAN-PIERRE CHANGEUX *Oxford* £17.50 & £5.95

I HAVE SOMETIMES heard French intellectuals bemoan their lack of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of scientific popularisation, by which leading researchers open their laboratory findings to the scrutiny of the laity. By contrast with the British empiricist approach, which has fostered such writing, the French have a tendency to grand theory: their Lacan to our Medawar, say. Two Nobel-prizewinning directors of the Institut Pasteur in Paris (the recent fortunate beneficiary of the proceeds from the sale of the Windsor baubles) changed this French tradition in the 1970s. Jacques Monod's *Chance and Necessity* and François Jacob's *Logic of Living Systems* offered powerful syntheses of current ideas in molecular biology set in a framework of scientific reductionism, and both books headed for the best-seller lists. Now their younger protégé, Jean-Pierre Changeux, has entered the lists of *haute vulgarisation*.

Neuronal Man arrives in England on the wings of cross-channel hype: 'A revolutionary book . . . Probably no one has ever attempted such an ambitious hypothesis of our knowledge of the brain,' according to *l'Express* and emblazoned across the dust-jacket. Well, no French author, perhaps; my own *Conscious Brain* did try to do the same thing in the mid-1970s. But this isn't just French chauvinism, it is also in part the chauvinism of that new breed of scientific hero, the molecular biologist, and I'm not one. Ever since the golden age which followed the discovery of the DNA double helix in 1953, molecular biologists have been looking for new worlds to conquer, and what more appealing than to turn towards the great unsolved mystery of the brain. Francis Crick himself started the move in this direction some time ago; Changeux and others have followed.

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It is certainly true that, if the 1950s and 1960s were the decades of the gene, the 1980s are the decade of the brain. Major new techniques, undreamed of even ten years ago, have produced a fascinating galaxy of data: noninvasive, computerised brain imaging; the use of monoclonal antibodies; even brain transplants. Changeux himself has done notable work on the molecular mechanism of one of the key properties of the brain, transmission of signals between nerve cells and their target organs, such as muscles. How that signalling is achieved, the roles of 'brain hormones', the cellular processes involved in learning and memory have all begun to be understood. Where once there was a babel of mutually incomprehensible disciplines, from anatomy to developmental psychology, now the lineaments of a unified neuroscience are beginning to emerge. Never ones to lose a trick, the Japanese have placed the analysis of brain processes at the focal point of research towards the 21st century in their $4 billion Human Frontier Science Programme, due to be unveiled by Premier Nakasone at the Venice summit this June.

Yet, despite this success story, there remains a core dispute over the appropriate philosophy and techniques with which to study the brain — or, more ambitiously, with which to explain the mind. One the one hand there is the systems modelling approach of the high-tech protagonists of artificial intelligence and cognitive neuroscience, to whom what goes on inside the brain-black-box is of less interest than the prospect of simulating its output properties in silicon. 'You don't have to have brains to be brainy', as Margaret Boden has put it, distinguishing the functional accounts of intelligent behaviour offered by the modellers from the causal explanations claimed by neuroscience. On the other hand there are the molecular biologists, uninhibited reductionists for whom in the last analysis all is to be explained in terms of DNA. This latter group are today's inheritors of the radical materialist physiology of the 19th century which argued that 'genius is a matter of phosphorus, and the brain secretes thought like the kidney secretes urine.' It is with them that Changeux unabashedly belongs.

His book begins with a neat if somewhat triumphalist 'history of the brain', from ancient Egypt to the Belle Epoque - clearly the trailer for the author's popular lectures at the Collège de France on which the book is loosely based. There follows a crisp discussion of the cellular and electrical properties of the brain and, on this basis, a discussion of 'higher' brain activities from sex and anger to consciousness and cognition. For Changeux, genetic and evolutionary processes are the key to brain function.

Of course he recognises that properties emerge in ensembles of nerve cells, which are distinct from those of any one individual cell, and that the wiring of the brain is not strictly predictable from a knowledge of the DNA of which it is composed. Indeed, it is not even rigidly specified by that DNA, for, in order to function *as* a brain — that is, a device which can learn and adapt its output as a result of experience — it must be possible to modify wiring as a result of environmental experience. And I agree with him that it is time to transcend the old nature/nurture dichotomies: we have plastic, modifiable brains and behaviour because we have the biology — including the DNA — which makes that plasticity possible. However, despite his concession to the existence of properties of cells and systems above the gene level, at the end of each chapter Changeux reverts to an expression of reductionist faith, claiming yet again that the evidence he describes points to the failure of more holistic explanations of brain function. In this, he reveals himself a worthy heir to the Monod, Jacob and Crick school of molecular biology, but not yet, I suggest, a fully-fledged neuroscientist. □

ENERGY

Tragedy of errors

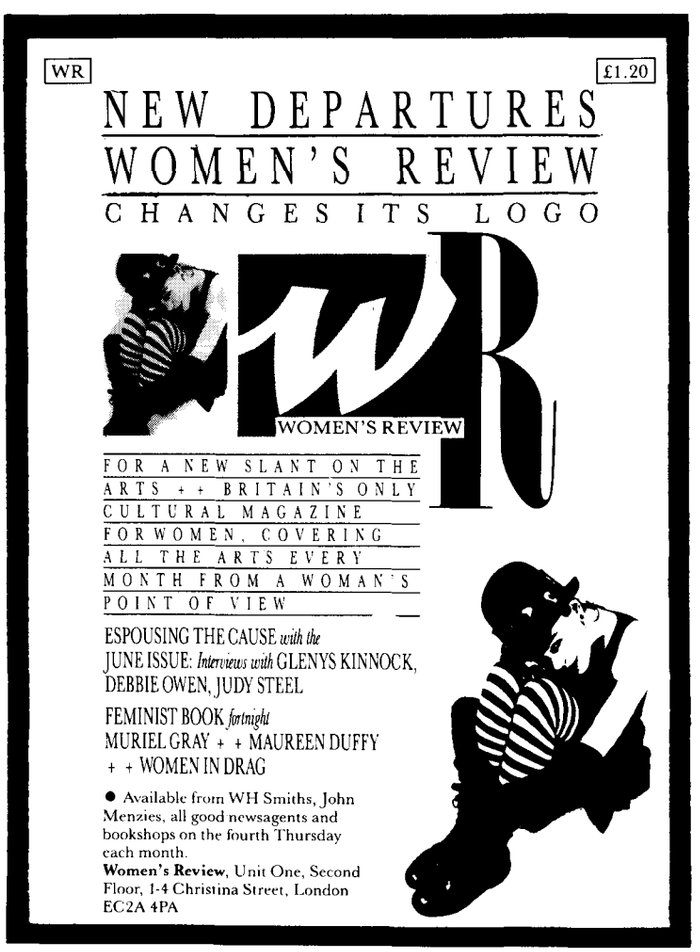
Rob Edwards

Nuclear Power in Crisis
ed. ANDREW BLOWERS and DAVID PEPPER
Croom Helm £25 & £10.95

ANNOUNCING THE GOVERNMENT's major change of plan on nuclear waste dumping at the beginning of this month the Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley looked a little ridiculous. When he attempted to present the abandonment of research work at four potential low-level dump sites as a rational decision based on new economic information, he sounded very silly. When he dismissed out of hand the suggestion that the decision could have had anything to do with the fact that all four sites were in Conservative-held constituencies distinctly unimpressed by the prospect of hosting the nation's nuclear nasties, nobody, but nobody, believed him.

His decision, like all the government's major decisions on nuclear issues, was political. It finally put paid to any lingering notion that there was a thought-out official strategy for dealing with nuclear waste. Instead, there is a short-sighted, self-serving blundering from pillar to post. The welcome reprieve for the four English communities (Bradwell in Essex, Elstow in Bedfordshire, Fulbeck in Lincolnshire and Killingholme in Humberside) sent shivers of fear through environmentalists in Scotland. For now the emerging favourite to win the waste dump of the century award — probably for medium and eventually high-level as well as low-level waste — is one of about 20 Scottish islands.

Ridley's charade is, as the essay in this book by Andrew Blowers and David Lowry makes clear, merely the latest in a long line of ill thought-out decisions on nuclear waste. In the early years no one bothered too much about it, assuming that a solution would be figured out somehow. In the 1970s there were plans to test-drill in various locations in an attempt to find a suitable hole in which to put high-level waste. After bitter opposition, especially in Galloway and the Cheviots, the plans were abandoned in 1981. The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waste, said the industry, would instead continue to be stored in tanks above ground at Sellafield in Cumbria for at least the next 50 years.

Another Government wheeze was to chuck low and medium-level waste into the sea. This route was blocked off in 1983 due to industrial action by the transport unions and a sustained campaign by Greenpeace. The newly-formed Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive (NIREX) then began looking at possible land sites. A disused mine at Billingham was rejected after its owners, Imperial Chemical Industries, changed their mind about the wisdom of having it filled with radioactivity. Until Ridley came to the rescue a few weeks ago, NIREX was happily investigating the four remaining English Tory shires. The strength of Blowers and Lowry's essay lies in its prescience. Written well before Ridley's reversal, it concludes by predicting the collapse of NIREX's strategy.

It shares with many — though sadly not all — of the contributions to this collection a firm grasp of the political realities that underlie appearances. There is a good analysis of the weaknesses, broken promises and fundamental unfairness of the Sizewell Inquiry by one of the few observers who stuck it out for virtually all of its 340 days, Jennifer Armstrong. Miriam Boyle and Mike Robinson have written a fascinating account of France's frantic drive to supply 70 per cent of its electricity from nuclear power stations by 1990. The peculiar political hegemony of the French nuclear industry, the highly centralised nature of French government and the absence of plentiful indigenous alternatives all combined to power France down the nuclear road. But, in the process, rather too many stations have been built too soon, causing an expensive overcapacity of supply. The French electricity board, EDF, made losses of 4.4, 7.9 and 6 billion francs respectively in 1981, 1982 and 1983. France has also ensured acceptance of nuclear plants by cutting the electricity bills and subsidising the rates of nearby communities. The country's anti-nuclear movement, which used to be one of the strongest in Europe, has become fragmented and is, believe Boyle and Robinson, 'weakened beyond recovery'. They conclude that Britain would be foolish to emulate the French, though that is what some of our nuclear enthusiasts would like to do. 'Prudence', they say, 'favours the tortoise'.

Other essays — with the exception of a thoughtful piece by Alan Craft and Stan Openshaw on cancer clusters round Sellafield — are less rewarding. There is a particular problem with the editors' scene-setting article which is predicated on the idea that 1983 was a crucial turning point in the history of nuclear power. It never was and, after the events in the East at the end of April last year, it never could have been.

The structure of the book as a whole is difficult to fathom and the selection of topics seems rather arbitrary (several of them were originally the subject of papers to the Annual Conference of the Institute of British Geograp! ers at Leeds in 1985). Why, for example, is there a somewhat laboured discussion of the 'Inter-regional Factors in the Location of New Nuclear Power Stations in England and Wales' but no analysis of the prospects for the fast reactor, certainly the most distressing electricity-producing machine the nuclear madmen have in mind for us? □

ENVIRONMENT

Slow burn

Martin Ince

Acid Rain
FRED PEARCE *Penguin* £3.95

ACID RAIN is the perfect environmental issue for the 1980s.

The villains are the Greens' old enemies, the power station and the motor car. The problem is massive and is fully international, provoking rows across Europe and between Canada and the USA. The science of just what is happening is mysterious enough to provide a constant flow of new fears and issues. The solutions are bound to be expensive and complex. And progress is slowed because acid damage is usually caused hundreds of miles from the place where the benefit — rapid travel or cheap electricity — emerges.

Fred Pearce has looked exhaustively at the acid rain problem in all its dimensions, concentrating on the European aspects and with a firm grasp of the science as well as the politics. He points out that damage from coal burning and similar activities has been a concern for hundreds of years: as recently as 1952, an acid smog in London killed 4,000 people. This kind of incident has been halted by industrial relocation and clean air laws, but these, in turn, have led to a new range of acid risks to people, trees, buildings, air and water.

Nowadays large rural power stations with high chimneys to disperse emissions ensure that British electricity consumption equals acid rain in Norway. And, while cities like London have been stripped of their power stations, the increase in car ownership there guarantees the release of a complex mass of dangerous chemicals into the atmosphere high above cities and motorways, to be rendered yet more harmful by reactions driven by a plentiful supply of free solar energy. Pearce catalogues in detail the damage done by acid emissions across Europe, from dead lakes and forests to sick people, corroded buildings, even decaying library books. On any comprehensive economic view, the cost must be billions of pounds a year. But the sheer scale of the problem and its international nature make the politics of solving acid rain as baffling as the science of atmospheric chemistry.

There are some signs of progress. The UK has been shamed into promising to fit equipment to remove sulphur from emissions from coal-fired power stations. This move alone will cost over £600m. in equipment. Add £170m. for new burners to remove nitrogen oxides, plus the time-honoured cost overruns, and it is easy to get to capital spending of £1 billion even for a programme regarded as too little, too late, by many environmentalists here and in Europe.

But, however limited this progress, it does imply that acid emissions from power stations can be solved more painlessly and with fewer radical consequences than the other electricity industry horror, nuclear power. For a few dollars more, you can burn coal without acid emissions, but it is hard to think of a form of nuclear power which does not involve radiation.

If the UK and the other big power station polluters do mend their ways, the next focus will be emissions from vehicles. Here, too, there is some sign of movement. Catalytic converters to clean vehicle emissions are starting to arrive in Europe and 'lean burn' engines with lower emissions are on the test bench.

But acid rain will remain a massive political problem. The damage being done is immense and spreading; some is irreversible. The millions of tonnes of pollutants will take decades of time and billions of pounds of expenditure to stop. The normal glacier-pace progress of any negotiations involving international agreement ensures that acid rain will be making headlines well into the 21st century. If anything can be gained from acid rain, it is the realisation that the problem must be approached internationally — and that this means effective international environmentalist movements, not just talking shops for mainstream politicians. □

Rats

Richard Tyrrell

When I was a student it was among
My mundane practices to cut up rats.
I became a dissecting specialist
Foraging around in the opened guts

Of these tiny, ferocious, weird rodents.
A benefactor, I clipped for mankind
The untapped resources of soricine
Abdomina, taking faith in the blind

Proven power of science to calm all means
While enlightening all ends. In my steel
And cagey laboratory I sang
The wonder of the rat's slim, supple keel

That so resembles a human inward
Anatomy. I gradually became
Something of a rat-connoisseur, learning
To appreciate their furious, sane

Thirst for existence. So while walking, say,
In the fields or by the local canal
I would be suddenly thrilled (or perturbed)
By the naked appearance of a paw

Ringed with frenzy; and thus I was amazed
To see a calm and savant water-rat
One day swim between a mother moor-hen
And her chicks, and artfully lead apart

The young ones toward some nebulous bower.
Other times, I have stood still on the bank
Gravely watching the large, calm pharaoh-eyes
Of a rat sunk low on his wettened shanks.

I used to be a scourge to these creatures,
Slicing, cutting, killing them without end.
Only, now it is their sleek rat's beauty
That slides into me, and refuses to mend.

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ARTS

CINEMA

Do you want to know a secret?

Judith Williamson

Empire State (15)
Cannons Haymarket, Bayswater, Oxford St, Edgware Rd
T Dan Smith (15)
Metro

***T Dan Smith* and a pair of investigative filmmakers down an old-fashioned pint**

POWER IS A DIFFICULT thing to visualise. Partly because it is not, in fact, a thing but an operation, a relationship; very hard to 'see', though certainly felt, its invisibility is easily confused with secrecy.

In recent years our filmic vision of state power has been channelled through the thriller format *(Defence of the Realm, Edge of Darkness)* where secrecy is essential if the hero is to have anything to find out. On a slightly different but related tack there have been the investigations of urban power in underworld thrillers like *The Long Good Friday* and *Mona Lisa*, where the 'old' London, as represented by Bob Hoskins, confronts a new ruthlessness in a world where secrecy is a visual climate of neon-lit alleys, gloomy railway arches and smoke-filled nightclubs.

It seems important to outline this territory because it is becoming a given that we visualise the evils of power in this deliberately 'film noir' way; and the phenomenon itself seems to say something about our times. 'Film noir' refers both to a visual style and a content; it is usually used to describe those thrillers of the 1940s and '50s where heavy use of contrast and shadow in the image went hand in hand with shadowy subject matter and plots so murky they often hardly made sense. Films noirs are now seen as expressing the deep social unease of their era. Yet what is interesting is that the term film noir was coined retrospectively — it wasn't used by the makers themselves — and the focus on this sub-genre in film theory and education has reached an almost obsessive pitch in recent years as our own times become harder. 'Down these mean streets a man must go. . .' and the meaner the streets the more men (and it is men) seem to go down them.

Both *Empire State* and *T Dan Smith* are about urban corruption — development schemes, corporate wheeling and dealing — and both self-consciously engage with the film noir format. The resonantly-named **Empire State** starts off almost as pastiche, blood on the typewriter keys as a young woman in a torn dress remembers what the journalist told her — 'Write it!' — and true to form the story is told in flash-back with a convoluted plot of gay pimps, boxers, businessmen, symbolic figures representing the change from the old East End to the new. Social comment is never more than a few lines away — 'a new leaner Britain needs a new kind of city' — and in the ring of the underworld what we watch is the battle between old-fashioned working-class bandits and new yuppy brutality, exemplified by the pimp. 'You haven't got class; everything you've got is bought,' the old gangland boss tells him; as in *The Long Good Friday* everything is a paradigm for 'Thatcherite' Britain, and there is a vivid sense both of decay and of the 'new breed' of entrepreneur who feeds off it.

Yet there is almost too much in it, too many ideas, too many characters representing too many things; the boxer, the reporter (for once, thank God, he isn't a hero), the bar-maid, the cute gay prostitute, the boy-just-arrived-from- the-North, the pimp's oriental PA — all seem to stand for something yet their weight as characters isn't enough to carry whatever else they mean, so that as the film accelerates it becomes a sort of post-modern melée of meanings about post-modern, post-industrial, multi-racial Britain. One of the film's greatest problems is its acting — people emphasise odd words in their lines, like airplane announcements (*'at* this time we *do* request . . .') and this makes the characters seem more cipher-like than necessary. The style hovers between the tongue-in-cheek of Peck's *What Can I Do With a Male Nude* and the urban realism of *Nighthawks*; these come together most powerfully in the claustrophobic night club where confusion, excitement and violence culminate in a particularly shocking scene that seems to place the film itself in an ambiguous relation to the ruthlessness it depicts.

This brings us back to power — which, clearly, can be expressed through violence; and in a sense the cultural clash that *Empire State* addresses *is* violent, a clash between political and economic forces — and styles; old working-class versus new urban upwardly-mobile. **T Dan Smith** also deals in a clash of political styles, as well as power, as it raises the story of a working-class radical caught up in suaver, secreter big-time politics and ultimately sacrificed to save bigger and more upper-class fish than himself. The film is half documentary — its subject is a real character — and half fiction — a dramatised contemporary version of the Poulson/Smith affair — wound together in a film noir style. This partly involves things like venetian blinds casting their shadow in the cutting-room; for the investigative heroes of this film are the filmmakers (or two male members of the group) themselves. Since they disagree on their 'angle', this device allows for a multiplicity of

TRAILERS

Living Dangerously is the theme of the 4th Piccadilly Festival (27 May-4 June) which offers a unique mixture of new and old, feature films and experimental video plus discussions on 'post-sex cinema' drugs and fashion. Info and tickets from 01-437 0757.

The first Merseyside screening of *Handsworth Songs* (Black Audio Film Collective), *Territories* (Sankofa) and *Hairpiece* (Ayoka Chenzira) takes place at the Merseyside Moviola on 31 May as part of its Black on Film season. Further details from 051-709 4988.

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views (sometimes rather simplistically presented as a multiplicity of video screens) and so — unusually — no single conclusion is drawn from the material. Yet the dramatisation of the two men as they walk the mean streets of Newcastle becomes rather irritating.

The reasons for this (to me, anyway) lie ultimately in the same cultural clash that *Empire State* deals with through its 'new-style' poncy pimp-dealer versus old, solid, beerdrinking working-class gangster. The makers of *T Dan Smith* locate themselves firmly in the latter category, eating fish and chips under railway bridges, drinking endless pints in endless unrenovated pubs to the extent that the film has the nostalgic aura of a beer ad. In contrast to this, the trappings of power are characterised as *effete*: the upper-class MP and the Home Secretary speak mincingly and sip sherry on leather sofas (while Labour councillors confer in the gents, without a hint of Orton in the air).

It may seem picky to stick on this iconography of the effete and the macho when, as a documentary, the film works well on many levels. But it *does* matter; and it also matters that the understanding of power is generally presented today as the unravelling of secrets (of particular fascination to boys, it seems). I am reminded of the characterisation of power in *Defence of the Realm*, ministers in sinister panelled rooms, journalists (and now filmmakers) in dark streets and shabby elevators. Is film noir the best way of representing power? Is what's wrong with the state really its secrecy? Despite working on a magazine whose recent reputation has centred on discovering 'secrets' I am inclined to think not. *Empire State* and *T Dan Smith* are among the most interesting and socially relevant of contemporary films, and this point may be something of a sideline. Yet the renovation of film noir, exciting as *film*, seems less effective as *politics*, precisely because it dramatises power as plot and focuses, ultimately, on its discovery rather than its effects. □

THEATRE

Sightlines

Victoria Radin

The Hairy Ape
EUGENE O'NEILL *Lyttelton*

DUE TO a combination of French immigration laws and the National Theatre press and box office (I'll spare you the details) I ended up seeing Peter Stein's Schaubühne production of *The Hairy Ape* from a seat in a corner of the circle. This frustratingly faraway perch ought to be the critical test for any performance and I'm not at all sure that Stein's remounting of his Berlin staging — his first to arrive in London since 1973 — came through with supersonically flying colours.

A great deal of my disappointment has to do with the play itself, written by Eugene O'Neill in the early part of his career when he was experimenting with parable, mask, Expressionism — and, alas, a kind of patronising folklorism. To read this play about a semi-literate and quite mind-bogglingly thick ship's stoker is to be plunged into a sea of plodding phonetic dialect — all 'boid' (bird) and 'ting' (thing) and 'trou' (through) — which muddies and sinks the spirit. I was plunged still lower by my failure to discover a significant intellectual or even emotional content. But what lifted me was the playwright's quite daring visual imagination: this play, with its characteristically loquacious stage directions, minutely visualised, is a series of images that might come in a dream or nightmare.

Yank, the stoker, is called a 'filthy beast' by a young heiress; this is amplified to 'hairy ape' by his mates. His disproportionate and quite masochistic revenge takes him first to Fifth Avenue, where he tries to gee up some churchgoers of her class, and swiftly thence to prison. From there he sallies forth to his local branch of the International Workers of the World (this was the period of O'Neill's friendship with John Reed) offering to do a spot of bombing. The International Workers throw him out.

His final station of the cross is the monkey house of the zoo, where a gorilla responds to his lachcrymose monologue by killing him, flinging the body in his cage and walking to freedom himself. Thus O'Neill reverses evolution, adding in a piteous aside: 'And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape belongs.' To what we know not; but the playwrighting son of a matinée idol, who sent him to the best school, never felt he 'belonged' either and once called this play 'unconscious autobiography'. And O'Neill had been, not quite a stoker, but a ship's mate, and probably because he was himself a member of the upper classes was enraged by the contempt that was showed to him. More consciously, and more generously, his play was an attempt to understand the suicide of a stoker whom he had befriended.

Peter Stein's production, on Lucio Fanti's monumental settings, is wholly faithful — except in scale — to O'Neill's stated look of the thing. For the first part of the play Fanti creates a seemingly life-size cross-section of a ship which reaches from the floor to the very roof of the theatre. Its iron exterior slides open to reveal the prison-like stokers' quarters, whose metal bunk beds could easily do for cages. Above it is the promenade deck, all freedom and violet-shaded skies, where the clownishly white-painted Mildred and her be-feathered pantomime dame of an aunt (both entirely in keeping with the intention of the author, who describes the aunt for example as a 'gray lump of dough touched up with rouge') carp at one another and — presumably to prepare us for Mildred's request to see the boiler-room — talk about the younger woman's surprising desire to do social work in Whitechapel.

In the boiler-room itself, sootily bare-chested men throw coal, in unison, into the orange-yellow glare of the boiler's round windows. Mildred's descent to this hell takes her from the top of the Lyttelton stage to the bottom, trailing her white dress down a spiral staircase; and it does give tension to this key scene which, as written, is diagrammatic and abrupt.

All the reviews I've read of this production have been reviews of its design. Is this the fabled Peter Stein staging, or a Lucio Fanti production? In the second half, where gaps between the short scenes last nearly as long as the scenes themselves and there are two pretty duff settings (Fifth Avenue, for which stagehands laboriously draw cutouts of buildings winking dollar signs across an entirely empty road, is particularly lame), a sort of deco-fatigue sets in. However, two scenes are splendid, and splendidly Expressionistic in the best German tradition. The prison sequence uses merely an echo and hands to indicate the other prisoners. And, in the last scene, the spherical monkey houses tilt in the opposite direction from the frame of the setting, while the sounds the primate-suited actors make are deliciously eerie and musical and authentic. Everything coalesces: I forgot about O'Neill's naive politics, his limited repertoire of images and his failure to weave his two or three ideas together. This became what Stein's work may always aspire to become — a pure form, in which sight and sounds are monumentalised because words truly do not matter.

The production initiates a four-company, international drama season at the NT: not quite the World Theatre Season of yore, but then we haven't the finances of yore. Its effects are certain to be felt upon our own companies and it is ultimately there that its value will lie. □

THEATRE

Breaking up

Paul Allen

The Sleep
PETE BROOKS *Glasgow Mayfest*
Sophiatown
JUNCTION AVENUE THEATRE COMPANY OF JOHANNESBURG *Glasgow Mayfest*
The Gorbals Story
ROBERT MCLEISH *Glasgow Mayfest*

NOW THAT WE HAVE had about 25 years of innovators telling us that words are out of date and the linear comprehension of narrative is boring and the image is supreme (it doesn't have to mean *any*thing, darling) could we perhaps have a counter-revolution in favour of content?

The Sleep is a risky title but a first-class idea for the theatre. It finds a modern parallel for the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in the case of a psychiatrist who uses a drug to bring a woman out of the catatonic trance she has been in for 40 years; at the last moment he realises that she is now 60 but still thinks of herself as 20, and his courage fails.

It makes eminently good sense that the story should be presented in a somewhat fractured way. Whatever goes on inside the head of a person in a catatonic trance brought on by a traumatic incident (in this case, it seems, seeing your father cavorting with a maid just after you have become engaged) it is unlikely to be the same seamless perception of reality that the rest of us mostly share. I do question, however, whether deviser and director Pete Brooks has not taken his multi-media show beyond the positive point of fractured understanding to the negative point of joining what sometimes feels like a conspiracy against understanding.

Many of the factors which lead to this would be

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acceptable on their own. Specially composed music by Jeremy Peyton Jones, for example, ranges from a nagging percussive insistence to a more seductive melodic style. However, it is a setting of Rilke's poem about Orpheus and it is in German. I didn't understand a word. The lighting is such that you cannot see the expressions of actors who come downstage.

From time to time the half-dozen or so actors in grey bras and knickers (both sexes) who form the supporting cast will leap into each others' arms and either be embraced or dropped (or both) in sharply juxtaposed exchanges of love and hostility. From time to time they will move stacking chairs about the stage in obsessive re-ordering of the banal scenery of their lives in a mental hospital. Good points are being made here, but they are being made so repetitively that the meaning is banged out of them. The essentially tragic figure of the woman herself (well enough played by Sarah Jane Morris of The Communards) and to a lesser extent the doctor (Tony Guilfoyle, offering a clarity and precision lacking elsewhere) are finally diminished, not given theatrical life, by this obscurantist treatment.

It is hard to resist the idea that, when a subject really matters to the people who are dealing with it, clarity and comprehensibility stand a much better chance of survival.

The Junction Avenue company from Johannesburg is a multi-racial, semi-professional company which devised **Sophiatown** from interview, archive and workshop material. The members rehearsed it in the evenings after finishing their day jobs and they got no money until the play opened at the Market Theatre and there was some box office coming in. **Sophiatown** is riveting.

It is the story of a community which, by accident of history, was in a tentative and often uncomfortable way multi-racial at the time the National Party came to power. Although offered 'better' housing elsewhere they tried for a time to defend this living affront to apartheid against the bull-dozer.

It is worth recalling the story because it is a witness to what might have been; and because, as one character says, memory is a weapon. This too is a multi-media show in that singing and dancing are an integral part of what is otherwise much more of a domestic drama that we are used to in companies from South Africa.

The acting, faced with the demands of naturalism, is to say the least erratic. However, the passion of the playing communicates itself unmistakably and nobody needed to ask what it was about.

The Gorbals Story was a big hit for Unity Theatre just after the war and has been revived by David Hayman as part of 7:84 Scotland's tradition of rediscovering modern Scots classics for Mayfest. Set in another community which didn't really know on what terms it should continue to exist (and playing at the Citizens' Theatre, which is all that is left of the old Gorbals) it has been updated to the extent that Hayman has supplied a coda reminding us that housing remains a dreadful Glaswegian disgrace. But its real attraction is the way it talks clearly and with teeming life to the community that gave it birth. If memory is a weapon it is not one that is being taken up here: the evening is too cosy, and it has a soap opera's capacity to sheer away from the worst events instead of confronting them.

Mayfest is in its fifth year, but its first under the directorship of Di Robson. I gather she faced some opposition at board level when she commissioned *The Sleep*: I would defend to the death her right to do it, and the punters' right to stay away, but it should be respected as a serious attempt to sharpen the aesthetic edge of the festival. □

The Sleep *will be at the Riverside Studios in London from 3 to 21 June;* The Gorbals Story *tours to Newcastle, Dundee and Aberdeen during June. For an overview of Mayfest, see Work in Progress, p. 31.*

ART

In opposition

Mo Dodson

A RASH of 'politically aware art' seems to have broken out this year. With politics so much in the air in any case, it may be an apposite moment briefly to survey some of the work.

Terry Atkinson, for instance, filled two galleries simultaneously with his Brit Art series in March. Moving radically away from his early 1980s

The Retired Serviceman.
The Agent. The GCHQ man.
The Civil Servant.
They all know the identity of the country's most dangerous spy.
But which one of them will finally blow the whistle?
THE WHISTLE BLOWER
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KENNETH COLLEY · GORDON JACKSON · DAVID LANGTON AND BARRY FOSTER SCREENPLAY BY JULIAN BOND BASED ON THE NOVEL BY JOHN HALE PRODUCER GEOFFREY REEVE
DIRECTOR SIMON LANGTON DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FRED TAMMES BSC COSTUME DESIGNER RAYMOND HUGHES PRODUCTION DESIGNER MORLEY SMITH ASSOCIATE PRODUCER PETER DOLMAN MUSIC COMPOSED AND CONDUCTED BY JOHN SCOTT
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photorealist images, Atkinson — a one-time conceptual artist — has produced 'abstract expressionist collages' accompanied by texts that refer obliquely to the problems of Northern Ireland. Sadly, the combination was esoteric and barren.

The Serpentine hosted **Stuart Brisley**'s Georgiana Collection for nearly two months in January/February. Brisley has also moved radically away from his performance art of the 1970s (Brisley has become stereotyped by his early marathon-length baths in blood and offal). The Georgiana Collection is very sober installation work that uses references to building sites, abandoned clothes on urban wasteland and the bars of jails and prisons.

In spite of my populist predilections, I was impressed by its deep and systematic attack on institutionalised violence: the avantgarde can, on occasion, communicate to the hoi polloi. Brisley, by the way, is currently artist-in-residence at the Imperial War Museum.

Accompanying Brisley at the Serpentine were **Ken Currie, Glenys Johnson** and **Mark Wallinger**, all flexing their political consciousness with figurative representations that veered from American-style social realism to postmodernist image manipulation. Most of it was unashamedly obvious — Wallinger's huge Union Jack covered with the word MUM shouted 'mother country', 'National Front', 'Margaret Thatcher', 'Falklands' . . .

But all this is a welcome change from the atmosphere that led the Arts Council to withdraw work by Tony Rickaby and Conrad Atkinson from the exhibition called Lives at the Serpentine, in 1979, for being too political. **Conrad Atkinson** has been active recently, thanks partly to the help provided by the Artangel Trust. A one-person show of his is on at the moment at the Talbot Rice Centre in Edinburgh University until 13 June and poster-works by him have been strategically placed in various public spaces in Britain, including locations in London, Edinburgh, Tyne and Wear and Sheffield. The posters are parodies of the front pages of the *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal.*

Atkinson's continuing efforts to invent, within the postmodern idiom, 'cognitive maps' of the contemporary social and physical environment have received accolades over many years from a surprisingly wide range of critics. His work attempts to deal with the way capitalism has interacted with the environment, trapping the common people in a pincer movement between rural capitalism and urban industrialisation. His references move smoothly from Shelley and Wordsworth to thalidomide and asbestos poisoning. In a sense his work might be seen as avantgarde illustrations to Raymond Williams' book *The Country and the City*. This is very much in line with his most recent work for a travelling exhibition organised by Common Ground (reviewed *NS* 17 April) who commissioned 18 artists to make 'maps' of an area they were involved with. (Atkinson's presence in the exhibition provides a cutting edge too often lacking in eco-politics.)

The ICA has recently played host to those two political heavyweights from America, **Nancy Spero** and **Leon Golub**, and is currently showing some heavy German angst as part of the celebration of Berlin's 750th anniversary. Although I am of course impressed by these VIPs of the art world, I am much more attracted to the kind of thing that the Ruins of Glamour . . . are doing in their transmogrified form as Desire in Ruins at the Transmission Gallery in Glasgow. After their Chisenhale show last winter, the group fissioned for a period while the organisational catalysts of the group, **Hannah Vowles** and **Glyn Banks**, put up an installation in Gimpel Fils, a gallery in the wealthiest square mile of the West End. Together again as a group in Glasgow until

Politics in gallery land: detail from Hannah Vowles' and Glyn Banks' installation at Gimpel Fils

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30 May, they will return to London and swell in ranks to approximately 200 artists for Another Wonderful Culture exhibition at Chisenhale. Their installations stand in opposition 'to both modernism and postmodernism' ('Karen Eliot') and lead the spectator through riddles of reconstituted popular images to a point that is supposed to emphasise our ideological entrapment while encouraging a kind of intellectual violence against the symbolic system that holds us in thrall. Implausible as it sounds, some of the work actually does this.

Also at Chisenhale from 26 August, **Rasheed Araeen** — dubbed by some as the wise old man of British black artists — will gather together the work of eight black artists practising in Britain today. This should be interesting in the light of the debates that have been taking place about the ghettoisation of black artists both in the 'First' and the 'Third' worlds.

If I have deliberately concentrated on the 'static' visual arts, it's because there seems to be so much of it around at the moment. However, this does beg the important questions as to whether the 'static' visual arts can adequately function in isolation from the narrative arts, whether art that is 'accessible' can adequately oppose the dominant ideology and whether art that's inaccessible can do anything at all. That's another story. □

Aquation

Paul May

Marriage, the civil engine,
Jump-starts behind head-stones;
Amidst the broken faces of angels
And the periscopes . . .

His family finds its level
In the brimming cemetery,
Solved and dissolved
Like bits of plankton algebra.

He recalls
Whispering bitter nothings
To the backless little number
That became identity;
Rehears compromises
Telescoping in crowds
Of couples concatenating . . .

Marriage, essential prop,
Does all the voices:
Siren, thunder,
The call to the country.

He spends half his time
Feeding the machine and half
Appalled at its momentum.
He digs his garden
And dreams displacement:

His exact weight in water
Falling as rain.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Belonging to Glasgow

Naseem Khan

WHEN MAYFEST number five closes its doors this weekend and puts away its flags, stickers and badges, its team and new director, Di Robson, are likely to open a discreet bottle of champagne. It has — by the normal criteria — been a good Mayfest. Attendance has been up, funding has been up, even national media interest has been up. Eat your heart out Edinburgh.

But Mayfest had such a singular birth, with such a special life mapped out for it by its parents, that the normal criteria are insufficient to judge its success or failure. It began life in 1983 as a gamble and a gesture of faith. Its first director, Ferelith Lean, devised it as an 'international festival of popular theatre and music' but, more importantly, as a natural extension of the city's radical Mayday celebrations. Mayfest was to be primarily for Glasgow, bringing the best to it and showing the best from it. It started out with strong trade union and local Labour authority support and, although it has its detractors, from the beginning it has been a winner. The programme has expanded each year and money has risen steeply.

However, the numbers game cannot be enough where Mayfest is concerned. Tacit within its own terms of reference is the belief that Mayfest is not, as other festivals too often are, an opportunistic conglomeration of minority-interest arts. Mayfest's relationship to Glaswegians has always been viewed as profoundly important. How is that relationship faring?

The answer is an interesting one. When Mayfest began, all its events — like those of most other festivals — were staged at the centre of the city. The second year, however, showed a significant change. A community side was introduced and events were taken out to Glasgow's bleak underside: high in unemployment and low in resources. Simultaneously Grace Grant, the scheme's director, ensured that theatre work from local groups was staged in the central Mayfest (though this idea lapsed after the first year). It is this de-centralising initiative that gives strongest credibility to Mayfest's claim to be different from other festivals.

At the beginning there were times when you might well have concluded that the whole thing was a pious, Centre-42 bit of wishful thinking. The estates and the housing schemes did not invariably see the introduction of culture as what they'd been breathlessly waiting for. Easthall, for instance, failed in great numbers to turn out for a solid and wordy dramatised life of Scottish socialist, John McLean, two years ago. Govan's pageant the following year also failed to raise the pulse of the community.

Mockers would conclude that the venture was misjudged. In fact, as Grace Grant has always steadily averred, community festivals are slow, long-term growers. The tradition of live performance in most of the areas in which she deals is non-existent. Mayfest has had to build it up and, this year, there was every sign that the four-year venture was paying off.

The places that did best, significantly, were ones that had participated in previous Mayfests. Garthamlock Community Centre was packed to the doors, no room even for a flea. And the show, this year, was a beauty. Put on by Wildcat Theatre and written by Tony Roper, it was a lively, warm-hearted, funny musical record of those much-loved Glasgow institutions, the 'steamies' or public washhouses. Commemorating the companionship of the days before the last steamie closed in the face of the clinical laundrette, it struck all sorts of chords with its delighted, vocal audience. So, too, did a show very different in tone. *Dixon's Has Blasted* at Eastfield Community Centre in Cambuslang, put on by Just Us, was less technically sure and had some faults of construction, but still managed, through its amateur community cast, to convey a credible and moving picture of a mining family at the time of the terrible pit accident at Blantyre in 1877.

Alien Arts had less drawing power — even though they had revived two plays by Scottish playwright C. P. Taylor — which seemed to confirm Grace Grant's 'slow growth' theory. For Alien Arts' venue, Kinning Park Community Centre at the edge of Govan, was new to Mayfest. The work itself was vigorously performed by a multiracial group (hence the group's name) but inevitably lacked the instant appeal or immediacy of the Wildcat or Just Us material.

How should the community side develop? Di Robson would like to see free buses next year, bringing people in to central events. If that happened, then there would be an undoubted need for the function of the community events to be reassessed.

Reassessment is necessary anyhow. Wildcat and Just Us were not isolated examples of success. Across the board, audiences were significantly higher, despite the increase in events from 100 to 270; Grace Grant's events budget has grown from £25,000 to £40,000. The programme, hearteningly, gives every sign of having found its feet. But, once there, questions of direction present themselves. What about the programme's scope, particularly in relation to visual arts and writing? Are longer residencies (a Writer in Residence maybe) possible? What is the balance between work developed in the area and work brought to it? How about the inclusion of Glasgow's non-white communities?

These are all areas to which Grace Grant is alive, but ones that are, she says regretfully, expensive. She still has only a part-time assistant and a limited budget. With all the constraints, she has managed to demonstrate potential. The next stage, if Mayfest is to build on its success, could be even more of a challenge. □

Paul Allen reviews three other Mayfest productions on p. 28.

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What is Labour's nuclear energy policy?

Dr David Lowry, Director, European Proliferation Information Centre

In his Media column (*NS* 15 May) Denis MacShane asks if anyone except Dr Jack Cunningham (Labour's environment shadow spokesperson and MP for the constituency covering Sellafield) remembers the difficulties faced by Dr Cunningham, and how the *Guardian* reported it, due to Labour's new nuclear energy policy agreed at the last party conference. I do, and the issue is unresolved.

Even though the nuclear energy issue in general, and Sellafield in particular, are unlikely to feature with prominence in the election campaign, the question whether an incoming Labour administration will put truth, honesty and integrity at the top of its priorities ought to be an issue. This is why the deliberate fudging of the Labour position over Sellafield's future, as picked up by the *Sunday Times* (17 May), is important.

The NEC statement on Sellafield, and endorsed by conference, stated, *inter alia*: 'We shall proceed with the construction at the site intended for THORP but not commission it for the purpose of reprocessing'.

Yet in an interview with *BNFL News* (February and March respectively) both Dr Cunningham and energy spokesperson Stan Orme have contradicted party policy directly. In Dr Cunningham's case he said specifically that the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) would not only be commissioned, but also *used* for reprocessing. In Mr Orme's case he categorically stated that while THORP would undergo an economic reappraisal the Labour government 'would honour the orders for reprocessing already placed'. As this reprocessing could only take place in THORP, this means regardless of any economic appraisal, it will be used for reprocessing.

Is Labour's diminished and diminishing policy on nuclear reliance to be paralleled by a similar policy on nuclear obfuscation?

Round the round arch

Dr Valerie Fraser, Dept of Art History and Theory, University of Essex

Mr J. G. Owen of Caerphilly (Letters 15 May) may believe that the civilisation of Western Europe has repeatedly favoured the round arch simply because it is the best solution to a technical problem and that therefore successive European imperial powers are justified in exporting it around the globe (along with democratic government, capitalism and other such self-evidently best solutions); I do not.

Jules Lubbock (*NS* 1 May), as I understand him, is not suggesting that all arches are explicitly imperialist Triumphal Arches, but rather that it is precisely because round arches have so often been used in the context of European imperialism that this meaning is always latent, always available. My own research, which Lubbock cites, makes it quite clear that in colonial Spanish America the arched portal is used on churches, all churches and exclusively on churches, to set them apart from other colonial as well as Native American buildings. In the earthquake-prone Andes the arch is *not* the most appropriate technical solution to the problem of spanning gaps, nor the stone vault to the problem of roofing. On the contrary: Inca buildings (without arches or vaults) have survived while time and again the churches designed to demonstrate to the barbarous natives the achievements of Christian civilisation have come tumbling down. It is J. G. Owen, not Jules Lubbock, who is simply wrong.

Red carpet or cold shoulder?

Fran O'Grady & Heather Wakefield, 33b Wilberforce Road, London N4 2SN

We are researching women's experience of returning to work after maternity leave. We know that many women either give up work or switch jobs soon after having a baby. We want to find out why. What happens to women who have babies and choose to go back to their jobs? We'd like to hear from women about their first day back at work. Whether you were given the red carpet or cold shoulder treatment by your employer and workmates, please contact us.

Silly economics

Ernest Wood, Okehampton, Devon

However did you get taken in by the silly story that it was sterling's role as an oil currency that crippled British industry in 1980-81, sending unemployment into an upward spiral (editorial *NS* 15 May)? The Tories themselves tried on that excuse until it got laughed out of court. Sterling was an oil currency in 1979 when it stood at $1.60, it was an oil currency in 1980 when it went up to $2.60, and it was an oil currency in January 1986 when it went down to $1.02.

It was record high interest rates that forced up the value of sterling against all the major currencies, making our manufactured goods wholly uncompetitive. The *declared* objective was to 'shake out' over-manning in industry. I don't believe Mrs Thatcher meant her policy to go as far as it did, but then she's an economics tiro too, so how should she know?

I hope you're not going to tell us we should believe all the lies the Tories are putting out now about the current state of the economy.

Avinash Persaud, Student Governor, LSE

Your 15 May editorial was so over-zealous in making the point that we can't blame Thatcher for all our economic ills that it inexcusably defended two of the major crimes of Thatcherism.

It is plain that Thatcher did not invent monetarism; but it is plainly untrue to imply that the last Labour government's controls on public expenditure and the money supply were simply a milder form of the same economic medicine. Concern that the economy doesn't 'overheat' is one thing. To push interest rates up to a crippling 17 per cent when the world was already on the brink of another recession, simply to chase monetary targets — as Mrs Thatcher did in July 1980 — is a different kettle of fish.

Second, it is true that the largest rise in unemployment occurred during the Tories' first couple of years and that this is largely explained by a 40 per cent collapse in British competitiveness between 1979 and 1981. It is also true that Conservative spokesmen blamed this fall in competitiveness on the advent of North Sea oil revenues pushing sterling and hence British export prices up. But there is little evidence that North Sea oil was responsible for sterling's massive appreciation between 1979-81.

In the academic world the 1980-81 economic debacle prompted the formulation of new, and today well-respected, theories of the seriously detrimental unemployment consequences of a Thatcherite adherence to monetary disinflation. Shamefully, the level of economic debate remains so low in British public life that Thatcher has escaped much of the blame for the tremendous misery she has brought to over three million families in this country. It is perhaps as shameful that a *New Statesman* editorial should help to find excuses for her, if only because the Tories will be spending over £20m in this election campaign as opposed to Labour's £4m to do just that.

Positive voting

Sara Spain, London SE3

Re 'A hundred reasons for not voting Tory' (*NS* 15 May): some of the reasons seem to have been duplicated, others being omitted. To take but two. Nothing on N. Ireland? Well, there is not so much to choose from among the parties here. But no mention of increased police powers? From a publication that used regularly to list arrests of Greenham women and miners, and defend hippies and anti-apartheid supporters, among others! Not one word about the miners' strike! Now, I wonder why.

What about something positive, like 'Twenty good reasons for voting Labour' or 'Three good reasons for voting Alliance'?

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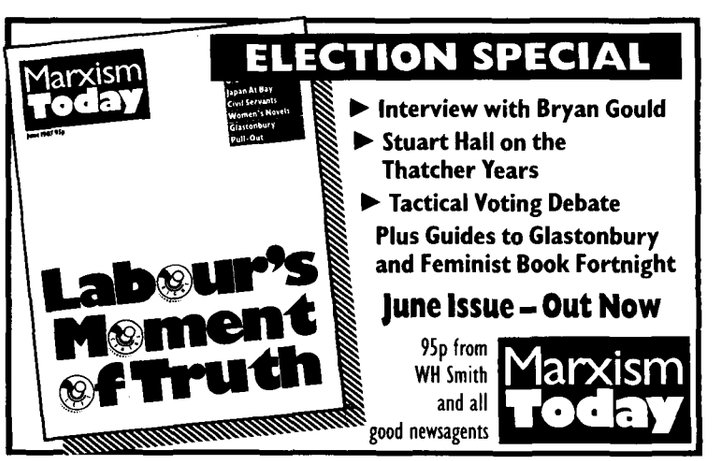

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Frontiersperson

Andrew Lumsden

THE QUESTION really is whether to emigrate to the new Athens of the Pacific, San Francisco . . .

Aaaaaargh! This very second, just as I sat down at 10.45 am in what ought to be the Sunday quiet of a W2 *quartier*, a blue saloon car parked opposite my windows across the road has let out an ululating scream. No one is anywhere near it. Its rear and side lights are flashing and it thinks it's being burgled.

Having jumped a foot in the air I'll try to settle down. As I was about to ask, before my head hit the ceiling: is the San Andreas Fault in California more to be feared than the widening San Margaret Fault in Britain? The Earthquake more than the Dearthquake?

I've just joined the unemployed (memo to Walworth Rd: I'm not signing on, so add 'one' to all uemployment stats issued by the Department of Employment & Propaganda). Envious fate has catapulted me, though a Southerner, across the island fissure to join the Northerners; from the Home Counties to the Away Counties.

I don't believe it. Three-quarters of an hour have passed, in which I've broken off for coffee, another dip into the Sunday papers and some head-banging. That car is still ululating and flashing at intervals of every few minutes. It isn't one of the neighbours' heaps. I'm going to phone the cops and ask if they'll come and give baby a pacifier.

Where was I? Ah yes . . . I have the *NS*'s own John Rentoul's just-published bible of British incomes-injustice propped open before me (*The Rich Get Richer*, Unwin Paperbacks, £4.95 from all departure-lounges, end of free advertisement; you *will* do as much for me won't you John when my *History of Ready-Mixed Concrete*, Verso, £485, comes out?).

Notting Hill copshop tells me I should be calling the Harrow Rd peelers but has promised to retail the message and save me time and another phone call. What a nice man.

Did you know — I'm idling through Rentoul — that in 1985 Prince Charles' chum Gerald Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster, 'provided Mr and Mrs Tebbit with a "good-sized family house, but not overly large" near the House of Commons'? I wonder whether, if I'm exquisitely toadyish to the Andrew Windsors, Archduke and Archduchess of York, their chum Elton John will supply *me* with a good-sized house, as overly large as he pleases, on Nob Hill, San Francisco?

To emigrate? I'd have to go through a battery of Aids tests. Robert E. Windom of the US Department of Health & Human Services (good God, what an Orwellian name for a ministry) has just told the Administration that he wants to do what Bonn has just been forced not to attempt: HIV-testing at the frontier. Of would-be immigrants only, mind you.

And I guess I'd end up with a CIA file, but what the hell, in place of my current MI5 one. Yes, gentle reader, I do have an MI5 file. I'm one of the few British writers to know it for a fact instead of merely supposing it. Some privilege.

Wild Select Committees wouldn't drag from me how I got the proof a few years ago, though I suppose truncheons in Conservative Central Office basement would. Fact about allegedly modern Britain: the buffoons in MI5 have a running data-base on your humble correspondent *because I'm homosexual and for no other reason whatsoever.* Still bemused that MI5 should have dished MI6 chief Sir Maurice Oldfield?

My poor head, that car is still feebly sirening. At 11.20 the nice man at Notting Hill said he'd tell Harrow Rd. He didn't. Harrow Rd told me so at 12.10 when I rang them. At 1.45 when I called again they said 'an officer's on his way'. Ah, it's 2.30 pm and the plods have at last silenced the infernal machine: two and a half hours after I asked their help and three hours after it started wailing.

I think I'll go and lie down. Next time you hear from me it'll be dateline 'Frisco. Redundancy money will get me there and I expect I'll be parted from the remainder by some sharpie selling me the Golden Gate Bridge. □

'He wants to see his money . . .'

FIRST PERSON

Getting 'em young

Nikki Foster

'IT'S MRS THATCHER!' they shout and, to the distant baying of a Commons debate, my two young daughters caper round the kitchen clutching their stomachs and making throwing-up noises.

An acquaintance, who happens to have dropped in, watches in total disbelief.

'Have you taught them to do that?' she demands, and I see her social work training produce 'care orders' and 'places of safety' like flash cards before her eyes.

I haven't exactly taught them, I console her, but I do recall the day we happened to see the woman on television and I groaned a lot and held my throat as if my last breath was being squeezed out every time she uttered. They have also witnessed Mrs Thatcher's voice causing a fierce display of foaming anger, sometimes resulting in cups crashing to the floor.

While my friend is obviously appalled that I have instilled such blatant prejudice in ones so young, I discover I am rather shocked at her reaction. Surely, since time immemorial, parents have been teaching their children how to recognise 'the enemy': the threat to their hunting ground, the signs of polluted water. Throughout history, babes in arms must have learned that, at the sight of a horned helmet or the Fleur-de-lis, the entire family ran like hell or fell to the ground and feigned death. All I have done is the 20th-century equivalent. I believe that my children's survival depends on being able to recognise a Conservative and take evasive action.

They are consumers of the National Health Service and have been, literally, from the moment they were born. They need to learn not only what, but who, can put both their health and their health care at risk. They are avid supporters of state education — they know no other and, I hope, never will — but it must be explained why they do no gym, paint no pictures, why their reading books fall apart in their hands. They cannot be greeted by silence when they wonder why so-and-so's Daddy hasn't got a job, when they ask why so-and-so's Granny cried when she said she was just waiting for a bed.

They already know that too many people have too little to eat; that being poor is desperately unfair in a country where some people are very

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rich; that people are frequently very unhappy when they can't get a job. This isn't propaganda, but observable fact. What they are now old enough to learn is who it is who tends to dismiss such facts as moonshine.

The fact that we can hear the 'enemy without' extolling the virtues of caring capitalism on the radio, describing the benefits of Toryism on the box, suits my purpose well. The clarion calls of Tories, daily broadcast in the media, make it so much easier to teach the children how to recognise cant and hypocrisy, to warn them that insincerity and duplicity, maybe plain old lying and deceit, are likely to be waiting just over the hill. Cynicism may be poor protection against the ravages that await us, but even a frail armour of the stuff is better than nothing at all.

My children's tumbling around the kitchen, convulsed with laughter when they hear Mrs Thatcher, seems no bad thing. She is, as she herself would admit, only an ordinary woman doing an important job, and laughing at each other has always been an accepted part of social control. We are, therefore, just healthily maintaining social stability in the privacy of our own home. The safety clause for those like my friend who worry for my children's biased upbringing is, of course, that children frequently react in a manner entirely contrary to parents' hopes. Recently, my elder daughter asked me what I would do if Mrs Thatcher came to the door. I replied that I would invite her in and offer her a cup of tea. My daughter looked truly appalled and I quietly glowed with pride that she should find this scenario so horrifying. I waited in case she wanted to explain why she found the idea so abhorrent. She stared furiously at me, looked wildly round the room and said, with utter distaste, 'We couldn't have her in here. No one's hoovered for ages.' □

WINE

Lay bottle lay

Stephen Brook

ON 13 APRIL a large envelope was delivered to me. It contained this year's first offer of 1986 clarets. Since prices had not yet been declared, the wine merchant, Nick Davies of the Hungerford Wine Company, could only offer estimated prices. Davies operates a scheme of Byzantine complexity by which would-be purchasers commit themselves to an order by stating the maximum price they would be willing to pay. Davies claims that this results in the lowest possible prices; the danger lies in buying wines on the basis of a single merchant's tasting from a cask.

Until very recently, buying clarets before they were bottled was a good way to secure a bargain. A fine wine offered at the equivalent of, say, £7 a bottle ex-cellars would, after the customer has paid for shipping, duty and VAT, cost about £9.50. By the time the same bottle lands two years later on a retailer's shelf it might sell for £15 or more.

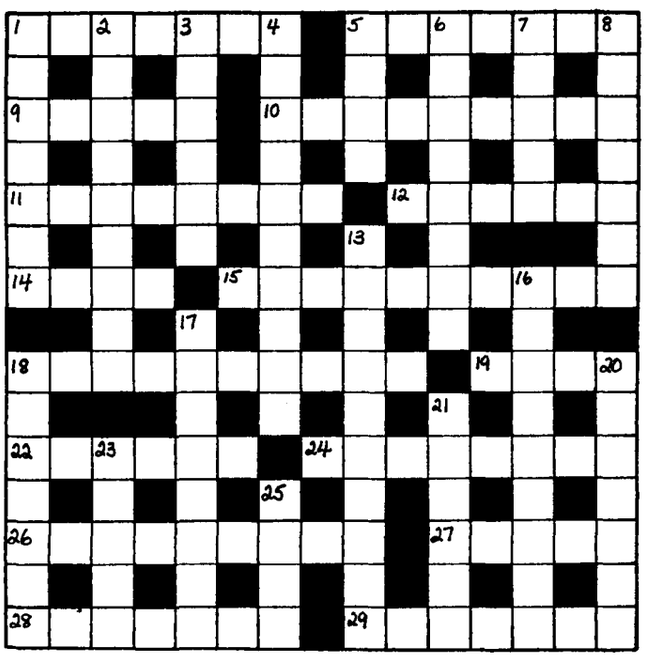
The risks, however, are considerable and, now that more and more merchants are touting the attractions of *en primeur* wine-buying, it's as well to be aware of them. First, you must buy on the basis of a handful of tasting notes. Assessing wines from cask is immensely difficult. The merchant must judge the quality of a wine not only before it is bottled but before it is blended; it must be assessed on the basis of promise, not current performance. Even if the assessment is sound, the wine will remain in cask for perhaps two years more and must survive numerous winemaking hazards before it is bottled and shipped. Moreover, wine merchants tend to overpraise the wines they hope to sell you.

Some Bordeaux properties make wine of consistently high quality. If the vintage reports are sound (and 1986 promises to be a good if not great year) chances are their wine will be very good. Such properties, aware of their reputation, also charge the highest prices. With less prestigious properties that often produce excellent wine, it is wise to wait until a number of merchants and journalists have tasted a range of them, so that you are in a position to compare tasting notes. Of course, the choice may diminish and prices begin to climb while you are judiciously dithering.

Once you've ordered, you must then wait two or more years before your wine is delivered. With claret or good red burgundy, you must then wait a further five or ten years before the wine is ready to drink. So there is little point in buying *en primeur* unless you are prepared to see some cash vanish for a number of years. (The Americans baldly call

Weekend Crossword 1559

£3 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1559, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 16 June.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

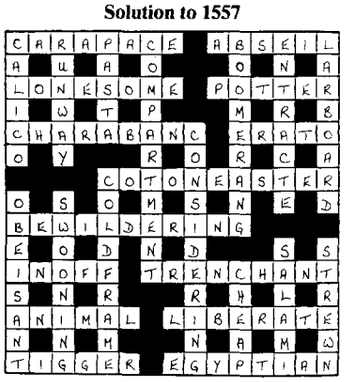
1. A friend goes with his girl to a place in the Med (7)
5. Prince gives honour to French town (7)
9. Trouble caused by Greek in a game (5)
10. It is a common pleasure to make a quotation about a great reform (9)
11. Weak but still in command (8)
12. Swear during a game (6)
14. Nymph in the choir (4)
15. Possesses about one in the far north, but it is old fashioned (10)
18. Insincere praise, as of vipers hidden among parasites (10)
19. Cabin key (4)
22. One who catches a coin (6)
24. A number of gentlemen about to become guests (8)
26. Having children is both note and symbol of marriage (9)
27. Polish fancy (5)
28. Stone stuck in cycle (7)
29. More than one of these coverings would hide the shy with a mask (7)

DOWN

1. Conciliate since deficiency is mainly in the head (7)
2. His plight is unusual but this will help to avoid disaster (9)
3. There is nothing in desert country for farmers (6)
4. Architectural feature which makes the chief go wild about it (10)
5. Being caught on time, this will keep him in captivity (4)
6. Point of departure from which music is provided on the journey (8)
7. Machine which is about an hour slow (5)
8. Being inclined to disbelief, cites police constable's version (7)
13. Regal in a disturbing manner after the violent impact is curtailed (10)
16. The mistake is in mountain climbing as a method of intimidation (9)
17. People in Crete changing into grave-clothes (8)
18. Match for a star (7)
20. Most of the finest go over the top to order (7)
21. The lady has to feel unhappy when we are elsewhere (6)
23. Ways in which love creates sadness (5)
25. Have a little drink up in town (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1557



Prizewinners to 1557

Arthur Jacob (St Austell, Cornwall)
J. C. Mace (Weston-super-Mare)
J. A. Adamson (Uttoxeter, Staffs.)

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buying *en primeur* 'wine futures', but I dislike the implication that wine is a commodity little different from copper or wheat.) Shrewd purchasers sometimes buy two cases of a favourite wine; then, after five years, they sell one case at a profit, thus paying for the case that is kept. This is called drinking wine for nothing, and sounds easier than it is.

Waving goodbye to your cheques is not the end of the risk. It is not unknown for wine merchants to go belly-up. In come the bailiffs or liquidators to seize the assets, which may well include a few cases of your wine. It is invariably better to deal with reputable wine merchants rather than with an unknown, even if the unknown appears to be offering lower prices for *en primeur*. You must also, unless you have your own cellar, be prepared to pay for storing the wine.

It was last year that the Bordeaux estates and merchants, overcome by greed, destroyed the entire *raison d'être* for buying claret *en primeur*. Opening prices for 1985 clarets (another good if not exceptional vintage) were so high that it was often possible to buy at auction mature wines of equal quality at prices lower than those demanded for 1985 wines still in cask. It is even possible that eventual retail prices of some 1985 clarets will be lower than *en primeur* prices. The incensed British wine trade, and its customers, who are no fools, made it clear to the French that unless prices came down by at least 15 per cent in 1986 hardly anybody would buy the wines. Well, prices have come down, but they still seem high to me.

I am still buying wine *en primeur*. Not claret, though, but Sauternes, port and Rhône wines. Recent vintages have been excellent, and prices, though no longer cheap, are comparatively reasonable. You can buy superb Hermitage or port from a top shipper for the same price as much mediocre claret and my cellar is increasingly stocked with Rhônes purchased at £20-£40 per case ex-cellars. You need not be rich to buy *en primeur*, but you do need to be patient, thirsty, cautious and willing to seek and take advice from good wine merchants. The only sententious advice I would wish to offer is that good wine is a drink, not a commodity. □

Weekend competition

No 2977 **Set by George Cowley**

Could we have ingenious reasons why the *NS* contained only 32 pages in the issue of 8 May? Max. 120 words by Wednesday 10 June.

No 2974 **Set by Eric the Red**

Inspirational songs for tactical voting — to the tune of 'The Internationale', 'The Red Flag' or 'Avanti Popolo'.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

Before I proceed to your Tactical Anthems, a word, Mr Cowley, about the impertinent Comp you've proposed for this week (see above). There *have* been times when the *New Statesman* wafted in to newsagents' shops at a mere 28 pages light; that we, in this generous, expansive age, more usually provide you with 40 full pages of intellectual rigour, political insight, amusement, information, provocation and passion *should not be taken for granted*. It doesn't occur of itself, you know: there are people messing their fingernails and bagging their 501s to make it happen. Even *I* have been known to stagger to Shoreditch well before mid-afternoon to satisfy your hunger — your *ungrateful* hunger — for excellence. However, let's see what you imagine we get up to . . . Meanwhile, back to the Anthems for TV. Apart from the fact that none of you knows the tune to 'Avanti popolo', and only three 'The Internationale', not a disreputable entry. Ten pounds a head to the winners — all, by default, to 'The Red Flag'.

The Liberals and the SDP
Aren't too far right of you and me
And, even though it makes one squirm,
Might block another Tory term.

Chorus: Together let us compromise
To bring about the right's demise,
For now at last we've seen the light —
Damn principles! The price is right.

MARGARET J. REEVES

The people's rag is scarcely read,
Four million read the *Sun* instead.
To stop a 'third term' tragedy,
We need a different strategy.

So raise our voices, shout defiance,
But spread the word to vote Alliance.
Sane, sensible and practical,
We'll keep our voting tactical.

DENNIS MACBETH

As PR is impractical,
The way to vote is tactical;
It only leaves your friends aghast
To nail your colours to the mast.
So dip your scarlet standard low,
We'll never change the status quo.
Though members moan and Tories jeer,
We'll keep the Red Flag drooping here.

With eyes averted swear we all
To bear it backwards till we fall;
Come Gallup poll or outlook grim,
This dirge shall be our parting hymn.
Then dip your scarlet standard low,
Keir Hardie snuffed it long ago.
With Hobsbawm bringing up the rear,
We'll keep the Red Flag drooping here.

NAOMI MARKS

In marginals when votes are cast
The runner-up's as good as last.
So gird your loins, be practical,
And let your vote be tactical.

To give the SDP a vote
May stick in every stalwart's throat,
But think of the alternative:
Kill pride and let your party live.

Then raise the flag of compromise!
Be sober, shrewd and TV-wise!
For if you don't there may well come
A Thatcherite millenium.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

THE WORLD'S MOST CULTIVATED GROCERY STORE

Is Chisholm & Pagett of Pall Mall, purveyors of high-class provisions to many of the crowned heads of Europe since 1879. To cross the threshold of this legendary emporium is to enter an Aladdin's cave of gastronomic extravagance. In the cheese hall, for example, you will find over 3000 varieties, including the lethally pungent Lithuanian Blue, which may only legally be sold to someone in possession of a current fire-arms certificate. There are more than 80 different kinds of caviar, flown in daily from the Caspian coast, wrapped in copies of that day's 'Pravda' as testimony to their authenticity. The range of 750 exotic teas includes the historic Earl Glastonbury blend (as served at the Imperial Majestic Palace Hotel) whose heady aromatic qualities have caused many a connoisseur to mistake it for a fine old Armagnac. And in the wines and spirits department itself, the complete stock list runs to three volumes and takes slightly longer to read than War and Peace. Curiously, the store only sells two ciders; Merrydown Vintage and Merrydown Vintage Dry. Merrydown uses only fine English apples like Bramleys and Cox's in its fermentation, rather than the bitter little cider apples used in those brands which you can buy in less discriminating establishments. If you have never witnessed the odd European monarch doing a knees-up in your local, check its stocks of Merrydown.

MERRYDOWN

Merrydown. Cider for the few.

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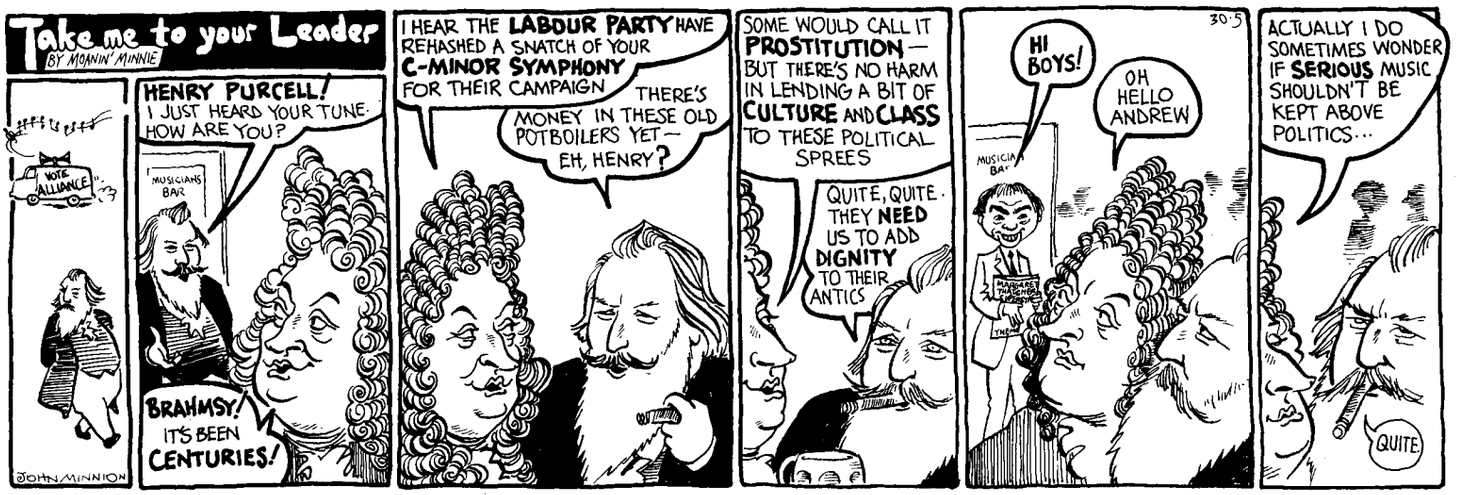

Take me to your Leader
BY MOANIN' MINNIE
VOTE ALLIANCE
HENRY PURCELL! I JUST HEARD YOUR TUNE. HOW ARE YOU?
MUSICIANS BAR
BRAHMS! IT'S BEEN CENTURIES!
I HEAR THE LABOUR PARTY HAVE REHASHED A SNATCH OF YOUR C-MINOR SYMPHONY FOR THEIR CAMPAIGN
THERE'S MONEY IN THESE OLD POTBOILERS YET— EH, HENRY?
SOME WOULD CALL IT PROSTITUTION— BUT THERE'S NO HARM IN LENDING A BIT OF CULTURE AND CLASS TO THESE POLITICAL SPREES
QUITE, QUITE. THEY NEED US TO ADD DIGNITY TO THEIR ANTICS
30·5
HI BOYS!
OH HELLO ANDREW
MUSICIANS BAR
ACTUALLY I DO SOMETIMES WONDER IF SERIOUS MUSIC SHOULDN'T BE KEPT ABOVE POLITICS...
QUITE
JOHN MINNION

Chess

FILLING an idle spot in last year's TV coverage of the K-K match, Nathan Divinsky's ripe transatlantic tones rumbled a warning to any chess-struck youngster bent on making a career of the game. Many try, few succeed. There is no job security, no pension scheme. Choose to be more than an amateur at your peril. Unfortunately, he coupled this reasonable general advice with a comparison between Nigel Short and Jon Speelman. The gist of this was that Short was younger, more talented, higher-rated — so go and get yourself a proper job, Big Jon. I would have thought this was not only a strange suggestion to make to the reigning British champion, but downright impertinent too. Jon himself, however, is the sort of large vegetarian who does not offend easily and he registered no emotion stronger than mild amusement.

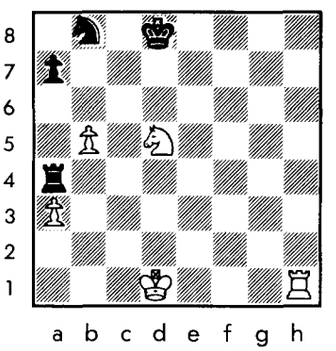
The way Speelman has been playing since then shows he could afford to let his chess provide the rebuttal. He retained the British championship (after a play-off with Chandler and Mestel), won a silver medal for his individual performance in Dubai, tied for first at Hastings, and notched up a mammoth 2790 rating performance in winning the Bath Zonal. Such results might have started people wondering whether Short really was the No.1 British hope for the world championship. But Speelman's main successes were at home. Would he be able to sustain this form in tournaments abroad? The Category 10 tournament in Beersheva suggests that he can, as he shared first place with Korchnoi on 8½/11.

This game from the event is a typical Speelman win. He unsettles his opponent with an untheoretical opening, starts the rough stuff with the pawn-thrust 12 . . . b5!, and has his opponent bemused by the compilations when he finishes him off with a blow from an unexpected angle:

Farago-Speelman, Beersheva 1987.
1. d4 Nc6 Jon played this against me in Bath, so I hope he thinks it's fit for serious use! In my opinion 2. e4, 2. Nf3 and 2. d5 are all better for White than the way Farago plays it. **2. c4 e5 3. d5 Ne7 4. e4 Ng6 5. Be3** Otherwise 5 . . . Bc5. But why has White placed his pawns on squares that enhance the value of the Black KB? Speelman obviously had a reason for avoiding . . . d7-d6. **Bb4 + 6. Nd2 Nf6 7. f3 Qe7 8. Ne2 0-0 9. g3 a5 10. Bh3 Bc5 11. Qb3 c6 12. 0-0 b5!** The tactics commence. Because of the loose Bh3 White can't play 13. dxc6 for fear of 13 . . . bxc4 followed by a double-attack with 14 . . . d5. **13. cxb5 cxd5 14. a4 d4 15. Bf2 Bb4 16. Rad1 Bb7 17. Nc4 d5** Black's control of the centre increases. **18. exd5 Bxd5 19. Qd3 Rad8 20. Bf5 e4! 21. fxe4** This leads to loss of the Bf2 and a fatal weakness in the g1-a7 diagonal. But if 21. Qxd4 exf3 and 22 . . . Be4 wins material. **Nxe4 22. Nxd4 Nxf2 23. Rxf2 Bc5 24. Qc3 Bxc4 25. Qxc4 Ne5 26. Qc3 Qa7!** Speelman is particularly good at finding surprise moves like this which don't *look* aggressive. It's no use trying to defend the Nd4. Black just keeps on capturing on d4, finishing with the fork . . . Nf3 + . **0-1.**

Comes another big tournament, comes another pre-publication offer from *Chequers Chess Publications:* their forthcoming book on the SWIFT tourney can be had for £4.95 if you send order and payment off by 15 June to Chequers, 18 Chalk Farm Rd, London NW1 — good value, judging by their previous publications, and the normal selling price of £9.95. But please note that the Chequers books have a distinctive, if not unique, format. The games are given in triplicate — bare score, move-by-move diagrams, and then annotated version. I felt this approach was strangely familiar. But where had I seen it before? Then it came to me — *Rupert Bear* stories! Sometimes it comes off very well, particularly in the case of *The Brussels Encounter: OHRA* which covers the tournament from which a selection of games have been screened in BBC-2's *Chess Classic* series.

Time for a reminder about our own competition, the Assiac Memorial Tourney for studies. Entries should be sent to me c/o the *New Statesman* by 31 December, with a maximum limit of 4 studies per composer. There are 5 prizes (£30, £25, £20, £15, £10). I hope I will also have to reward some 'Honourable Mentions'. I don't know if one could call this study a 'modern classic', but I do know that it's one of my favourites — and it first saw the light as an *NS* 'Hon. Ment.' in 1968. White to play and win.



Solution to last week's position from **Yusupov-Tukmakov**: Black could have settled matters neatly with **30 . . . Ke7 31. Bb5 Rb4!** An unusual double-attack. **32. Rxb4 Rxg1 33. Rg4 Ra1!.**

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

☐ Vanessa Hart, a pet groomer in Ilkeston, Derbyshire, is offering to dye dogs' coats in party colours for the election campaign. She set up the service with a £40 weekly government grant. — *The Times* (A. R. Horwell)

☐ Shelter housing advice worker, Richard Lynch, agreed. 'There is nothing more off-putting to a tourist than tripping over a corpse on the beach,' he said at the recent meeting to launch a hostel for homeless people. — *Hastings & St Leonards Observer* (J. Claessens)

☐ Sales of dog chews are giving Mrs Thatcher an even bigger boost than any of the opinion polls. The Tory leader is topping the huge demand for the Pet Hate canine toys. A total of 500,000 have been sold in the past two years and Thatcher will be delighted to know that her effigy is gnawed by three times more animals than that of any of the other party leaders. — *Sunday Times* (Amanda Welles)

☐ The villagers and Vikings — members of the Brighton-based Guild of Warriors — staged a bloodthirsty pitched battle on the manor lawn. Eventually the Viking raiders were beaten and the villagers' treasure recovered. It was exciting family fun for the holiday weekend. — *The Leader* (Mrs B. Fenton)

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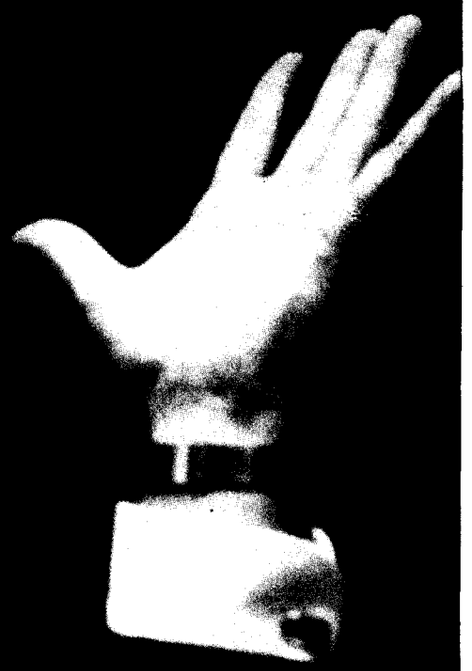
Labour manifesto

June 1987 75p



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